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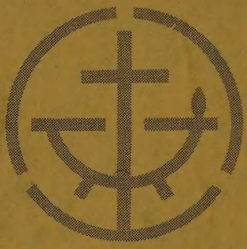
CHARLES D. HELMER

AN EARNEST LIFE OF FAITH BY GRACE



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H. ROCHER. CHICAGO.

CHARLES D. HELMER:

An Earnest Life of Faith by Grace.

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According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.

—ST. PAUL.

NEW YORK:
A. S. BARNES and COMPANY.

1880.

DEDICATION.

FROM A DESIRE TO MAKE THE MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED NAME MORE ENDURING AMONG THE CHURCHES OF MY HUSBAND'S MINISTRY, AND TO EXPRESS IN SOME DEGREE MY PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF THE UNCEASING DEVOTION OF THE DEAR PEOPLE TO WHOM HIS LIFE-WORK WAS GIVEN; TO

The Plymouth Church, Milwaukee,

THE UNION PARK CHURCH, CHICAGO,

AND

THE TOMPKINS AVENUE CHURCH, BROOKLYN,

THIS MEMORIAL OF HIS LIFE AND SPIRIT IS DEDICATED IN GRATITUDE AND LOVE.

S. B. HELMER.

330065

INTRODUCTORY.

My Dear Mr. Barnes:

You ask me to add some words as an introduction to the Memorial Volume of Mr. Helmer; and you urge the wishes of his estimable and honored wife.

No motives could be stronger, and I am grieved that I have so little to say of one who deserves so much. Helmer was a rare man. I have met few like him, or comparable.

He possessed uncommon intellectual gifts; and they had been thoroughly trained. He was a close thinker, an able reasoner, fluent with pen or voice, and had his health been firm he would have left behind him works worthy of his great ability.

But yet more remarkable was he in disposition—and that is the true measure of a man. Simple, artless, loving, his friendship was a treasure of which one might be proud.

He was without a particle of irritable ambition; yet he had high aspirations, and was forever striving to reach a sublime ideal. There was not the slightest taint of that jealousy, nor a trace of that envy, that so often mar the souls of eminent men. He could rejoice in the success of fellow-laborers, even if won at his own expense.

A purer, truer, nobler soul, a manlier man never lived. To know him was to understand the religion of Christ.

While he was in Brooklyn I was so cumbered with care that I had little time to cultivate his acquaintance, or to enjoy that friendship

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are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." 135

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY

J. T. MATTHEWS.

"*His life was gentle, and the elements*
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'THIS WAS A MAN.'"

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

I.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

CHARLES DOWNES HELMER was born on the 18th of November, 1827, at Oakhill, in the town of Canajoharie, Montgomery Co., N. Y. He was the fourth-born of nine children, having seven brothers and one sister, all of whom but one, a brother, are still living.

His father, Steuben Helmer, was descended from one of the Palatine families that came over from Germany during the colonial period, and settled in the inviting valley of the Mohawk, near the ground now covered by the village of Fort Plain.

He is said to have been a man of very marked character. Although he had enjoyed during his youth only such scanty advantages as were afforded by the common school of that time, and was obliged to spend nearly all his after years in wringing from an obstinate farm the bare necessaries of life for his large family, he nevertheless, by the careful reading and study of a few good books, and by making the best use of whatever opportunities came within his reach, succeeded in attaining a position of influence and honor in the community, "which was of more value to his children," says one of them, "than any other legacy he could have left them."

For many years he was a public magistrate, and so sturdy was his integrity, and his judgment so fair, that his neighbors, for miles around, sought his trusty services whenever they had contracts, deeds, mortgages and wills to be drawn up, or estates to be administered. Even when, after crossing the advanced line of three score years and ten, he left his eastern home to spend the remnant of his days among some of his children in the western part of the State, he was obliged to relinquish his office of executor in a number of estates.

That the example of such a father in the business affairs of life made a deep impression upon the son who is the subject of this sketch

cannot be doubted; nor can there be any doubt that this salutary impression was deepened by his religious character, for he was an out-spoken and out-standing Christian, one who enforced his verbal teachings by the upright doings of his daily life. And besides, must it not have been of some advantage to the youth who was destined to occupy a most responsible position in the kingdom of God, that he was accustomed to see his father filling serviceably the office of an elder in the Presbyterian church, and that he knew him to have held that office with honor and respect from early manhood? If the youthful son found him rigid in his judgments and strict in his requirements, he was never repelled thereby, since the rigor was always tempered by the utmost kindness and even tenderness.

The boy's mother, Frances Mulford Helmer, was a native of East Hampton, L. I., and for several years prior to her marriage a member of the church of which the famous Doctor Lyman Beecher was pastor. To the instruction and guidance of her children she brought a rare natural endowment of mental and moral qualities, all developed to a high degree under the ministrations of that grand old pulpit king.

In common with the rest of her children, Charles was largely indebted to her potent influence for what he afterwards became. True, this influence was not long continued in his case, as she died when he was still quite young—only about ten years of age. But although her guiding hand was withdrawn from him so soon, it was not until she had led his ready feet into those safe paths of thought and feeling from which they never afterwards stepped aside.

The home in which those boyhood days were spent was a plain farmer's house, where the good effects of temperate, regular habits were experienced, and where simple rustic duties were performed, from day to day, by all members of the household. It was a quiet, secluded spot, where young Helmer learned the real dignity of labor, and where a sympathy for those whose lives are spent in hard manual toil was kindled, which never, in after years, burned out, as we shall see on more than one occasion. Often must his filial heart have gone back from later days to this dear home of his childhood, and lingered affectionately around it, as the happy spot where a respected father laid within his soul the foundations of a true manhood, and a devoted mother placed her hands on his head and blessed him.

I have spoken of the old house as *lowly*—lowly only in its structure

and occupations, however, not in its situation, for that was lofty, as it was perched on the summit of Oakhill, at an elevation of many hundreds of feet above the valley of the Mohawk.

Remembering, as we do, what a fine inbred love of nature characterized Mr. Helmer, we can easily imagine that when a boy he often stood in his father's door-yard, or sat perched on one of the fences, following with his admiring eye the pleasant land as it sloped gradually down in every direction—down to the Mohawk, which flowed seven miles to the north—down eastward, southward and westward, to a winding stream called Bowman's Creek. Beyond this stream the land rose again in a high mountain range, a spur of the romantic Catskills, which did not disgrace its illustrious parentage. Starting from its nearest point in the south, the enraptured youth could follow it away for miles on either side, and around almost in the form of a crescent, until its sharp, clear outline softened and faded into a dim, ethereal vision of beauty. As this curving range was not of abrupt ascent, but swelled gradually from the intervening valley, it presented to the youthful gazer many charming upland views of cultivated farms and alternating groves; and if, from these sweet pastoral scenes, he would turn his eyes to nature, where it showed the unmodified impress of the Creator's hand, he had only to lift them to the wild ridges and peaks, that, crested with primeval forests, fringed half the horizon.

Such was the natural scenery that engirted the rural home of young Helmer, and upon which he daily feasted his æsthetic eyes during the first fourteen years of his life—scenery so exceptionally fine that travelers familiar with the scenic wonders of Switzerland often spoke of it with enthusiasm, in comparison; not that it had the grandeur and sublimity of the Alpine region, but because it was a panorama of such quiet and varied beauty.

Now, when we find Mr. Helmer, in the last year of his life, while writing from the White Mountains, speak of their magnificent prospects as "the nourishers of soul and character," can we doubt that he, with his observing eye and susceptible mind, derived much of his remarkable strength and breadth of character from these superb surroundings of his early home? Still less can we doubt that the rare poetic faculty that he afterwards developed was first stirred within him by the marvelous and ever-changing landscape that lay within

the scope of his vision. When he saw the summer breeze ripple the fields of ripened grass and grain, or followed the shadows of the low-sailing clouds, as they chased one another for miles along the mountain side; when he watched the gold and crimson vapors of the morning, as they curled gracefully up the slopes and floated off into the azure; or gazed dreamily at the purple shadows which, at the close of day, dropped silently into the valley, we can easily believe that many a poetic shade of feeling drifted over his mind, and that many a poetic fancy curled up and floated vaguely through his soul.

Before we turn away from these material surroundings of our youth, we must trace yet another important influence that came in upon him through the medium of their famed historic associations. I have recorded that his German ancestors had helped to form a colonial settlement on the banks of the Mohawk, and now it is to be added that, in common with all their neighbors, they suffered great hardships, first, during the old French and Indian wars, and, afterwards, in the war of the Revolution. During the boyhood of Mr. Helmer there was a revered grandmother of the household—a lingering relic of the olden time, and thrilling were the stories often told by her to the children at the winter fireside—especially thrilling when she recounted the cruelties perpetrated by that notorious half-breed, Brant, and his Indian hordes, at Cherry Valley and along the Mohawk. These stories were easily drawn from her remote childhood, and as readily taken in by her youthful listeners, as Cherry Valley was only three miles away on the south, and the Valley of the Mohawk but seven miles distant to the north. Here, then, were the springs of that passionate love of country, which, from a mountain brook, grew into a broad, deep river with Mr. Helmer's advancing years—here, in these fireside tales of his childhood, and in the historic associations that trailed along all the neighboring streams and over all the adjacent hills.

II.

SCHOOL DAYS. [1833–1849.]

When about five years old Charles began to attend the common school of the district, making his daily pilgrimage of two miles down into the valley, and back. From the outset he made rapid progress

at his books, and was beloved by his successive teachers. At the same time, he entered into all the sports and games of the school-ground with his whole soul, for he was chock-full of vivacity ; and, as he always played fair, and never lost his good temper, he was a general favorite.

Thus pleasantly and profitably the bright, earnest lad went studying and playing through one year after another until he reached his fifteenth, when he left his native village to enjoy the larger advantages of a select school at Newville, in the adjoining county of Herkimer. It was while pursuing his studies there that the early counsels of his father and the remembered prayers of his sainted mother drew down upon him that divine influence by which the King of kings was enthroned in his heart, and, on his return home at the end of the school year, he became a member of the Presbyterian church, of which his father had so long been an active and honored elder. This was in 1843, when he was sixteen years of age. The honest and thorough consecration of himself to his Divine Master, which he then made, took on, at once, a special form, and from that time his studies were steadily pursued with a view to the clerical profession.

In the autumn of that same year he went to a seminary in the village of Clinton, and entered upon a classical course, preparatory to a college career. Although one of the youngest of the students, he at once took a high stand in all his classes.

At the close of the academic year an incident occurred which is worthy of record, because it reveals the maturity of his mind at this early period. With a few of the more promising students, he had been selected to prepare an original oration for public delivery at the closing exercises, although considerably younger than the other appointees, and less advanced in general studies. At last the eventful day arrived, and the school was gathered in one of the churches, which was packed with friends who had assembled to listen to the addresses. Among the guests seated upon the platform was an able and venerable clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Williams. When young Helmer, in his turn, ascended the rostrum and began to deliver his oration, the old gentleman evinced peculiar interest by craning his neck, and then hitching his chair about so as to get a better view of the youthful speaker, not ceasing from his latter manœuvre until he had placed his chair where he could look him well in the face. The production, which was of real merit, was delivered in such an effective

manner, that, when he closed, the old gentleman exclaimed aloud, and in great enthusiasm, "*God bless the lad!*" a sentiment to which the entire audience responded in a burst of genuine and prolonged applause.

The following autumn found him in the academy at Little Falls, where he remained until his preparation for college was finished. As at Clinton, so here, he at once took high rank among his classmates, and never lost his standing among the best of them. And yet he did not confine himself to the prescribed curriculum, but continued a practice, already formed, of writing essays and poems on various subjects, until he became an easy and graceful writer.

In the Fall of 1848 the Rev. J. A. Priest (now pastor of the Presbyterian church of Newton, N. J.) took charge of the academy, and completed Mr. Helmer's preparation for an advanced class in college. As an excellent portrayal of the appearance, character and attainments of our friend at this time, I will here insert the most of a letter that Mr. Priest has had the kindness to write me :

". . . . . As to my first impressions of him, I can only say that he struck me, at once, as one of the handsomest, manliest, brightest persons whom I had ever met, and on farther and long-protracted, intimate acquaintance, I found him to possess one of the truest, noblest spirits of earth. In scholarship he was approached by only one other in the institution, and in oratory he was wholly unapproached. His voice, manner, and admirable discernment of the thought which he was uttering, made him a natural orator. Although not long, as I suppose, from the farm—that noblest practical school of earth—he had not a particle of the rustic about him, but was ease and grace themselves. I felt from the first that in elocution I could do nothing for him, and, perhaps unwisely, told him so. But I do not know that it ever hurt him.

"One of his striking qualities at that early time was self-poise. Without a particle of apparent conceit, he was never anxious or excited about anything. He had a firmness which was remarkable ; and yet it was so tempered by calmness and kindness, and was so evidently preceded by thought and conscience, that you were almost impelled to reverence him for it. I remember his once saying to me, while my student, that one of the most painful experiences of his life was to change after having decided. This quality, bowed in

obedience to what he believed to be the will or truth of God, made him as solid as the rock. His hostility to slavery—in that day of obloquy for being an "abolitionist"—and his devotion to the cause of temperance, were as marked then as in after years. With all his quiet, he was a natural radical.

"Before the year was out, while still continuing his own studies, Charles became one of my ablest assistants in teaching. . . . . He was not then what would be termed a fervent Christian, but beautifully consistent: simply irreproachable."

Such were the qualities, habits and principles with which our cherished friend left the Academy of Little Falls in the summer of 1849.

III.

IN COLLEGE. [1849–1852.]

In the autumn of the same year Mr. Helmer went to Hamilton College and entered the Sophomore class. Only one year was spent there. At the beginning of the next he went down to New Haven and became a member of the Junior class of Yale. What induced him to make this change in his college relations I cannot say. He certainly loved Hamilton, and as certainly was respected by her, else he would not have been afterwards honored with an invitation to read a poem [a telling one on "Something to Read,"] at the dedication of her Perry H. Smith Library Hall. Very likely he was lured to the classic shades of Yale because that was preëminently a *national* institution—because he would there come in contact with a multitude of young men drawn together from all parts of the land; not only from the hills of New England, but from the savannas of the South, and from the prairies of the West, and from the newer regions stretching away beyond the Mississippi. As Mr. Helmer was a man to appreciate this peculiar advantage of New Haven, he was doubtless influenced somewhat by it in making the change. And if, as he walked for the first time under the shadow of those dingy and uncouth walls, he thought of one and another of the host of good and true men who had gone forth from them to ascend into high places of influence in the land, many of whom, like Evarts and Buckingham, Ferry and

Pierrepont, Blagden and Bacon, were still upon the stage, could his earnest soul have helped feeling the stirrings of an ambition to prove himself worthy of his connection with those honored halls of learning? Certain it is, that he entered upon his life and duties there with noticeable enthusiasm, and, armed with the best resolutions, pushed on toward "that proud entrance upon our American life which begins with a Baccalaureate degree."

It was there that I first met my friend. "Here comes Helmer, a new student; I want you to become acquainted with him," said one of my classmates with whom I was walking on a golden October noon, directing my attention, as he spoke, to an erect young man, who, with an elastic step, was approaching us across the College Green. I have in mind, as I write, the very spot on which we met—the overarching elm under which we stood while we exchanged greetings. I recall, as clearly as if it were but yesterday, his pleasant smile, his affable manner, and the cordial grasp of his hand. I felt, as I parted with him that noon, that I had made an acquaintance that should be cultivated; and it was cultivated quickly into a friendship which grew from year to year, and with better and still better fruit to the last.

As was to have been expected, it was not long before the new student had won an honorable position in his class and the good opinion of all his instructors. Having come there with an ambition that could not be satisfied by the regular collegiate discipline, he undertook to give himself a broader training by outside courses of reading, all wisely adapted to this end. And yet he did not neglect his college studies, only went beyond them; now carrying on some special line of historical research, then wandering off into the enticing paths of Belles-lettres.

At the same time he continued to perfect himself in the art of expressing his thoughts exactly in written forms, and also entered in downright earnest upon the practice of speaking them out extemporaneously. And so successful did he become in the latter method of communicating his ideas, that his subdivision of Junior year for dispute seems to have risen into prominence, largely through the high repute that he had gained by the rapid development of his powers in this direction. Nor were his forensic achievements confined to that narrow arena, but carried on upon the wider floor of one of the great

voluntary societies, where the students of all grades came together and mingled in spirited discussions. In these general discussions Mr. Helmer took a frequent part, and with a scope and force of argument that caused him to be regarded as an uncommonly skillful debater. This conceded pre-eminence as an off-hand speaker, coupled with his acknowledged superiority in writing, made his classmates proud of him, and justified them in prophesying in glowing terms of his future.

Here it must be added, that Mr. Helmer's versatility of talent also revealed itself frequently, during these two New Haven years, in poetic effusions, which were generally recognized and admired. Hence one of his classmates is found addressing him in his Autograph Book at the close of their Yale days, as his "poetic friend," and another there expresses the hope that his "poetical fame may go beyond those walls," while a third says, "Considered universally as a gentleman, scholar, and poet, never shall I meet your like again."

A gentleman, as well as a scholar and poet, and, first of all, a gentleman. So another of his intimate associates testifies in these same pages to his "gentlemanly deportment and agreeable address," and yet another says, "Your gentlemanly conduct and adhesion to right have won you many friends in Yale." "Let me express my esteem for your manly character," writes another of his familiar companions, and followed it up with an assurance that it is no empty flattery. Still another of them writes, in a vein of pleasantry: "I can never hope to meet with a better specimen of the Knickerbocker race than yourself." It seems that his classmates had fallen into the habit of calling him Knickerbocker, curtailing it sometimes to Knick, and occasionally, with more familiarity, addressing him by the cognomen, Diedrich.

It is to be seen through this, that our collegiate was distinguished for good-fellowship, notwithstanding his earnest devotion to study. But here is a clearer glimpse of the humorous side of him, given by one of his classmates: "I well remember seeing you for the first time, as you were seated behind me in chapel at the beginning of our Junior year, and wondering who that *staid* and *precise-looking* young man could be. I afterwards learned to detect and admire the *joviality* and *good-humor* concealed beneath that demure exterior." Here is another glimpse of this cheerful side of his character at that time,

where "Dear Diedrich" is spoken of as one who could "crack jokes and talk metaphysics." It appears, indeed, that his good feeling could make him so amusing that "the walls of Old South would occasionally reverberate to sounds of mirth." And yet these entertaining effusions of wit were only brief respites from an earnest, steady application to his books, which caused him to be described by one of his most appreciative friends as "a dignified youth ever at his patient toil;"—ever, except when he relieved the strain by these occasional in-door festivities, or by more frequent out-door recreations.

Unbending himself from severe study at the close of a summer day, he would go down to the water-side, and, stepping into the good barge Excelsior, as one of her crew, sail away over the rippling surface of the bay, to land, perhaps, on the historic spot, sacred to all the sons of Yale who remember with sorrowful pride their ill-starred Revolutionary brother, Nathan Hale. And there we see him, on one occasion, lingering with his boat-mates after the sun has gone down and the stars are out, indulging in "poetic musings by night on the dismantled ramparts of Fort Hale." If, on a pleasant holiday afternoon, he has preferred to refresh himself by a hard tramp instead of an easy sail, we can imagine him strolling off with some agreeable companion to West Rock, and climbing its rough ascent to peer into the Cave of the Regicides, those Puritan judges, who, in striking at tyranny in the person of the first Charles, had helped pave the way for American independence.

At length this happy period of Mr. Helmer's life came to an end. For the last time he occupied his accustomed seat in the recitation-rooms of the Athenæum and the Lyceum; for the last time he spoke upon the floor of his literary society; for the last time he worshiped in the dim old Chapel; for the last time he helped propel the Excelsior down the harbor and back, although, in a higher sense, he never ceased to row a boat of that significant name; for the last time he wandered under the grand old elms by starlight. The next day he who had been, as one of his classmates put it in his written farewell, "Petted by the Faculty, envied by the Seniors, admired by the Sophomores, wondered at by the Freshmen," made his last appearance upon the college stage, and, graduating with distinguished honors, went forth to meet the serious demands of the day upon his thinking mind and loving heart.

As Mr. Helmer designed to spend a year or two in teaching before commencing his professional studies, he carried from New Haven the following testimonials of scholarship and character :

I entertain a high opinion both of the scholarship and the ability of Mr. Charles D. Helmer, and should place him among the first and best scholars of his class. In moral character and deportment, he is, I believe, entirely unexceptionable.

THEODORE D. WOOLSEY, *President of Yale College.*

NEW HAVEN, June 6, 1852.

I concur with the above, *cordially* and *entirely*.

N. PORTER, *Professor of Moral Philosophy.*

YALE COLLEGE, June 7, 1852.

I am happy to say that I regard Mr. Charles D. Helmer as among the best scholars of the graduating class, and I have no doubt that he will faithfully and ably perform the duties of an instructor of youth.

DENISON OLMSTED, *Professor of Astronomy.*

IV.

IN THE SEMINARY. [1854–1857.]

After spending two years as a teacher at the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in New York, Mr. Helmer, in September, 1854, entered the Union Theological Seminary in that city, and began to study directly for his chosen profession.

There I had the good fortune to overtake him, in the autumn of 1856, when the friendly relations of college days were renewed. But, as my life there overlapped his by only one year, I must sketch his seminary career largely by the help of a mutual friend, who was closely associated with him through the entire course, not only as a member of his class, but also as his room-mate—Professor William B. Dwight, of Vassar College. Let me quote from him at once, respecting our friend's standing in his class and his habits of study :

"As to scholarship, Charles Helmer certainly held a very high rank in our class. I do not see how any member of the class could justly have been rated higher, unless it might be for mere feats of memorizing, or perhaps for proficiency in the Hebrew. He was very

faithful in the study of Hebrew, and acquired all that would practically be needed for the purposes of an efficient ministry in the language; but I judge that, deeming it of secondary importance, he gave his best work to exigetical, doctrinal, and rhetorical studies, and to English literature.

"He was especially careful in exigesis, but always aiming to secure the true meaning of a passage as derived from its spirit, taken as a whole, and from comparison with kindred Scriptural passages, rather than from mere verbal exposition. . . .

"In doctrinal questions he was wide awake, and took pains to make himself well informed. He was, during his seminary career, very broad in his doctrinal views, impatient of dogmatism, spurning all narrowness in creeds and disputations about non-essentials. While always ready to discuss the larger and more practical questions of theology, he would have nothing to do with idle contentions over the numerous minor and more subtile points of dogmatic theology, arising from attempts to formulate divine mysteries, which are essentially incapable of such formulation. He did thoroughly believe, however, in defining clearly such terms as are capable of clear definition."

This dominant propensity of Mr. Helmer caused him to admire greatly, as I remember, that gentle-hearted, fair-minded, clear-headed scholar of scholars, Professor Henry B. Smith, to whose rare lectures on Theology he, with the rest of us, had the good fortune to listen in those days. Says his old room-mate:

"I recall the fact that he used often to commend his [Professor Smith's] fairness in defining the positions of the various sects or commentators on controverted points of theology, and his willingness to admit the strength of an opponent's arguments. He used to give him the credit of looking faithfully, and with the most consummate patience of investigation, on all sides of a question before giving his own decision."

I am here reminded of having read, not long ago, a poetical tribute that Mr. Helmer paid to the memory of Professor Smith, enwrapping thoughts that had come into his mind while standing beside his revered teacher's grave at Northampton—fine thoughts, that could only have come into a mind finely in accord with his.

As has been already intimated, Mr. Helmer's reading during these three seminary years was not confined to theological books, but went

out into the general fields of science, government, nature, and polite literature. In the latter field he was a constant reader of the great English authors—especially of Shakespeare.

"Shakespeare [says Professor Dwight] was always near his hand, but largely also in his head. Frequently, when attired for the night, he would give vent to the high pressure of life-power yet remaining within him at the close of a laborious day, by declaiming favorite passages from this great poet, with some stage action thrown in, here and there, to point the meaning more effectively. He reminded me of the steam-engine at the close of its day's work, blowing off steam with great energy, the better to prepare for the rest of the night."

Another of his favorite studies at this time was human nature—not the nature of men in general, but the nature of this one, and of that. He was a close and discriminating observer of men. He could see at once into an honest, candid soul, and was just as quick to detect a hypocritical one, for no disguise was too thick for his penetrating eye. Hence he had his likes and dislikes, his sensitive heart being as strongly repelled by the spurious as it was attracted by the genuine.

And yet, while those to whom his heart was drawn most closely, and who came to know him best, found him generous and sympathetic indeed, others, who were less in his confidence, thought him lacking in fraternal feeling. But this came largely from the fact that he did not "brother" them all freely on every occasion. Brotherly he was in an eminent degree, but it was not in him to make a cheap outside show of it. He was too honest—too unaffected for that. For what is commonly called "gush" he had no relish, and from anything like cant he instinctively recoiled, both were so entirely foreign to his nature. No hollow words from him, therefore—no mere conventional phrases; only careful words carefully spoken. Unfortunately, some at this time, as not a few in after years, failed to discover and appreciate the great heart that throbbed with friendliest feelings behind this cautious reserve. Alluding to those of his acquaintances in the Seminary who thought him very intellectual in his tastes but deficient in emotional elements, his intimate classmate says:

"That such entirely misjudged him, I feel convinced from my intimate knowledge of his daily life. Yet I can see how such an impression should have been given. . . . There was ordinarily no

impetuosity in his speech ; he had an instinctive contempt for . . . . phrases laden with fervor which they do not really carry ; for careless expressions of feeling which might have to be taken back before long. On the contrary, he was cautious in expressing his feelings, and quiet in his phraseology and in his tones. This some may have interpreted as indicating lack of interest ; but all that he said he *meant*, and much more ; and he never committed himself to expressions of regard which he soon found were excessive and to be retreated from."

It is to be remarked, too, that Mr. Helmer never looked into a person's pedigree, or examined the quality and style of his garments, before venturing to show a kindly interest in him. His occupation might be externally low, coarse, even menial ; and yet, if it was useful to others—if it served the inferior wants of society and was performed with fidelity, it always commanded his respect. How that quick sympathy for the humbler members of the community, which was kindled within him by the rustic environments of his boyhood, went out from him, at this time, in considerate attentions to those of subordinate positions in society, will appear in this short extract from Professor Dwight's reminiscences :

"It was his invariable practice, wherever he boarded or wherever he visited, to learn at once the names of the servants, and always to call them by name, and win their good will by his friendly manner."

But, while it was perfectly natural for him to "condescend to men of low estate," he had no respect for those of "high degree" who arrogantly flourished their superiority—especially when this vainglory assumed the form of ecclesiastical supremacy. A ludicrous incident, given by his old room-mate, will illustrate this point :

"On one occasion he came in from the passage-ways of the Seminary with his eyes all in a sparkle of merriment, and holding his nose tightly between thumb and finger as if he was trying to keep himself from exploding. It seems that he had just met one of the leading pastors of the city with whom he was well acquainted, and who evidently considered his title of Doctor of Divinity a very essential part of his *personnel*. 'Good afternoon, Mr. Blank,' said Helmer, meeting him too suddenly to grasp the full augustness of the presence. '*Doctor* Blank, if you please,' answered the clergyman, who never thereafter failed to receive his full title from our friend."

This laughable episode leads me to say that the good humor which

welled up out of Mr. Helmer's genial nature in college was never checked by the more repressive atmosphere of the seminary ; but was continually brimming over to his own relief, and rippling out to the enjoyment of those about him. And this cheerful flow of his daily life seems never to have been disturbed by any of the jealous rivalries and petty ambitions which will creep even into a Divinity school. He did not care to push ahead of anybody else ; only to push on from what he himself was toward what he was aiming to be. To make the most of himself in his chosen profession was his one high ambition. His whole soul was in this, and to it he gave all his strength. This one thing he was doing, whether he was listening to the lectures of Professors Robinson and Smith, Hitchcock and Skinner, or recruiting himself by a frequent excursion out into the country or up the beautiful Hudson ; this one thing, while drinking in, from Sabbath to Sabbath, the chaste eloquence of Dr. Adams, or imbibing an occasional draught of ennobling music from a philharmonic concert ; this one thing, while elaborating a poetical work on Superstition, which was so highly approved by the literary critic of an eminent publishing house that it might have been printed, or delivering an address before the Rhetorical Society of the institution, which was the only one of many that I distinctly remember ; this one thing, while giving an open ear to the discussion of new social topics at philanthropic conventions, or standing, as I once knew him to do, at a voting precinct through a bleak November day, distributing ballots that should help the nervous city through a perilous crisis.

With him, all these various paths of thought, feeling and action converged to the central object of his life. He carefully developed every gift that would in any way contribute to his success as a servant of the church, neglecting no element likely to make him, not a well-rounded preacher only, but a preacher for the *times*—for the times in his own country. Naturally enough, then, his theme for the closing exercises, on the evening of May 11th, 1857, was THE AMERICAN PULPIT.

V.

ABROAD. [1857–1858.]

Although now ready, so far as a theological equipment could have made him ready, to step into this pulpit, Mr. Helmer had a larger

idea of preparation for it, which he immediately proceeded to fill out. There were some other fields of knowledge to be compassed, some further observations of persons and things to be made, beyond the limits of his own land. He would go to Europe, therefore, and was not to be diverted from his purpose by an invitation, from President Woolsey's own hand, to a tutorship at Yale. Accordingly he sailed from New York with one of his classmates, a few days after graduating from the seminary, and crossed the Atlantic, to spend a year and a half on the other side in study and travel.

Several months were devoted to study, mainly of the German language and literature, first at Heidelburg, where the summer was spent; then at Berlin, where the autumn and winter were passed. With the opening spring he started out upon an extensive tour of observation through Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France and England. As we trace his course from Berlin, through Dresden to Vienna; thence, over the Alps, to Trieste, Naples, Pompeii, Salerno, Florence, Rome; thence around through Switzerland, to Paris and London, we must imagine him going out from these great centres, often with a knapsack on his back and a staff in his hand; thus getting many a bit of scenery, and many an insight into the habits and customs of the various peoples, which would not have fallen within his observation had he pursued the more ordinary, but less penetrating, methods of tourists.

From this year of University life in Europe, and the following months of travel amid the glories and charms of its picturesque scenery, with many a long day given to the historic associations and art treasures of the old cities, he recrossed the Atlantic, broadened in character and with resources enlarged and multiplied.

VI.

FIRST MINISTERIAL LABORS IN HARTFORD. [1858–1859.]

Immediately after returning to America Mr. Helmer was invited to preach in connection with the famous Dr. Horace Bushnell, in the First [or North] Congregational Church of Hartford, Conn.

Our friend now presents a spectacle of greatest interest, because

his personal history has reached its most important epoch, and is entering as a new force into the life of the church. It is a transition from preliminary culture to ensuing action—from a tree in blossom to one in fruit—from an overflowing fountain to the outflowing stream. The fruits are to be of what kind? and how many? Is the stream to be a narrow rivulet, or a broad, far-reaching river? Will Mr. Helmer's course of life, from this time on, entitle it to be called what Cicero called Aristotle's, "a river of flowing gold?" Is it to be a stream that shall make glad the City of God? We shall see.

The flattering invitation to Hartford was bravely accepted, for it required bravery to do it, and the new preacher entered into his specific work, not, like many another of his profession, in a perfunctory way, but carefully, and with great zest, alive to its claims upon his best efforts, and eager to give them.

For several months he preached to the large and critical congregation of his famed colleague, and so acceptably that, on the 15th of April, 1859, he was formally invited to settle among them as an associate pastor. But, despite the "earnest desire" that he should accept their invitation, and knowing that they were "praying to God that He would guide him to a favorable decision," Mr. Helmer deemed it "best and wisest to decline," and so informed the committee of the church on the 5th of May.

But the gifted young preacher had so favorably impressed himself upon the Christian community at large, that another effort was immediately made to retain him in that city, and on the 11th of the following month he received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the Second [or South] Congregational Church. Notwithstanding this call was made "with entire harmony of feeling," and strongly urged, Mr. Helmer, "suspecting the wisdom of assuming such a responsibility without more experience," felt compelled to decline it also.

Meanwhile the promising record of the young Hartford minister had gone out far and wide, and other urgent solicitations were now pressing in upon him from several quarters, most strongly from a Presbyterian church in Binghamton, N. Y., and from the Plymouth Congregational Church of Milwaukee, Wis. The Shawmut Church of Boston, too, had its eye on him, and was reaching out, with an evident intent to lay hands on him, in a courteous invitation to come and see them.

Milwaukee proved to be the strongest magnet to his enterprising spirit, and thither he was drawn, to the sundering of many a tender tie in Hartford; but reconciled to that pain by the belief that he was going to "a field for which," as he said, "I am better fitted, and where my usefulness may be as much or more than here." That his usefulness there was much, is evinced by the fact that not a few of the old congregation, who listened to those first sermons of his, still remember them as ministrations that helped them, both for this life and for that which is to come.

Among the many warm friends whom he left behind him in that Eastern city was the appreciative man to whom he had been related as acting colleague—Dr. Bushnell—who, in a letter written sixteen years after, alluded kindly to their "old-time relation," by saying, "it was only pleasant to me, and left nothing to be remembered with dissatisfaction."

VII.

PASTOR OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH, MILWAUKEE. [1859–1865.]

On a bright, warm day in the leafy month of June, Mr. Helmer arrived in Milwaukee; he, too, bright and warm, for he was in the June of his life—in its early summer-time.

As he was seen, at a glance, to be an open, candid man, full of cheerful feelings and warm sympathies, all the people opened their hearts, at once, and took him in. He was to be their pastor, and they were glad.

On the evening of September 13, 1859, he was ordained to the gospel ministry, and installed over this happy church, its first pastor, the Rev. John J. Miter, preaching the sermon, while President Chapin of Beloit College charged the pastor, and Dr. Kitchell of Detroit addressed the people.

Mr. Helmer had hoped for the presence, on that occasion, of his good friend, Dr. Bushnell, who was then recuperating himself farther up in the North-west; but his infirm condition would not allow it. Prior to the important day, however, that reverend Nestor sent his young friend some pleasant words, saying, among other things, "I think you are to start under the best auspices," and adding, a little further on, "I like

PLYMOUTH CHURCH, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

the show of the congregation very much." He had recently visited the church, it seems, on his way to St. Anthony's Falls, and had seen, what was plain enough, that it was full of fresh life and strong hope. He knew, too, that Mr. Helmer had come to it in the bloom of early manhood, and with admirable qualifications for the work there awaiting him. Hence his conviction that the new leader was "to start under the best auspices." And must not the earnest young pastor have been spurred along by the stimulating words with which the old pulpit hero closed his congratulatory letter: "Go deep into this deepest of all realities, the gospel of Christ; preach him in his living personality, as you know him, and live in him. '*Whom* we preach, &c.,' is the way." Then, "O, if I could have this joy again! but I must wait, and if it does not come again, still wait, wait, and be still."

But, happily, this joy was all before the vigorous young man whom he was addressing—the joy of preaching Christ, as he preëminently did, "in his living personality"—the Christ whom it had pleased God to reveal *in* him so clearly that he could speak that which he *knew*, and testify to that which he had *seen*. Largely at the outset, and more and more as he went along, did he preach out of a soul deeply penetrated with an experimental knowledge of divine truth. Says one of the older officers of Plymouth Church, in the course of some reminiscences after Mr. Helmer's untimely death, twenty years later, "I can well remember the first sermon I heard him preach. It was from Christ's words: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' I was deeply interested in the discourse, and have never forgotten it." Thus he began, and so he continued to proclaim the gospel of the Son of God, until the time came for him, also, to "wait, wait, and be still."

Although Mr. Helmer was now a duly accredited minister of the gospel—an ordained clergyman, he was none the less a *man;* not a *priest*, to stand above and apart from the rest of his kind; but one of them, still, in common feelings and sympathies—an official man, and yet a brother-man. He was not, henceforth, to be "a separate star," that "dwelt apart;" but one of the constellated brotherhood of believers, near enough to feel thoroughly with them, and to be felt powerfully by them.

Powerfully, because he had come entirely prepared to act upon them with the best effect. He had not rushed into his work, as we

have seen, with feverish haste, and such poor gifts as could be snatched up by the way; but had approached it deliberately, through long years of mental and moral training, bringing, therefore, a drilled intellect, a seasoned judgment, a mature reason, and a ripe piety. His convictions were strong, his principles fixed, and his feelings steady.

It was fortunate for him that he had, for his first charge, a church that had been solidly founded by the wise Rev. J. J. Miter, and afterwards compactly built up, during memorable years of heavenly sunshine and showers, by the gifted and loving labors of the Rev. Z. M. Humphrey. He immediately succeeded the latter, who had been called to Chicago, and found the people standing shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart; as eager to be led forward in their holy undertaking as he was to lead them. And yet, though eager in taking up his work there, he did not carry it along impetuously. He was not a bustling man—never seemed in a hurry; for he did not believe that true efficiency consisted in hasty efforts and momentary effects. His comprehensive idea of the character of his work was not to be realized by merely laying the foundations of godliness, nor by a one-sided superstructure; only by building up his people into Christ "in all things." Repentance and faith were great things with him, but they did not make up the sum-total of salvation. That included all the results of conversion—a well-rounded Christian character and a full-orbed Christian life. Hence, while Christ was the center of all his teachings, it was Christ on Calvary, and Christ on the Mount of Olives—Christ in the completeness of his redemptive work, from beginning to end, within and without, and all around.

In other words, Mr. Helmer looked upon the Church of Christ as a *School*, remembering that its divine Founder had presented it in this aspect—had called His followers *disciples*, who were to *learn* of Him. He also remembered that the apostles were sent forth to *disciple* all nations, and that this was just what they did, that they gathered the people into their Master's school. He remembered that Paul, more especially, held up this aspect of the Church, representing the members of it as learners, and the ministers as teachers of their brethren; that he described the private member as "him that is taught," and the minister as "him that teacheth." This true idea of the Church, too dimly discerned by many, he saw clearly; the more clearly, perhaps, because the particular church over which he had

come to preside contained not a few young converts, swelling fruits of the recent awakening, that needed to be ripened into maturity by immediate and judicious culture. Hence, he at once put his high conception of the Christian Church into practice, regarding it as a place of religious instruction, and treating its members, its newer ones in particular, as pupils that needed to be trained in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour. He took them in hand as "children," or novices, who were to grow up to maturity of knowledge—"babes in Christ," some of them, needing to be taught the elementary principles of religion, to begin with, and thence to be led along gradually into its deeper mysteries.

Now, because the new pastor considered the upbuilding of his people in holiness of prime importance, and aimed at completeness of Christian excellence, he had no use for sensational methods, which he detested, nor for hair-splitting tenets, from which he recoiled; only for deep conceptions of duty and wide principles of action. These, therefore, he diligently sought for his congregation, and, that he might bring them forth in their greatest vitality, he drew them, not from the often incorrect, or too narrow opinions of men; but directly from the Word of God. His preaching was then, as always, biblical, rather than theological, and biblical in the spirit instead of the letter. In preparing himself for his Sabbath ministrations and for the mid-week services, he carefully entered into the mind of Christ, and, drawing thus from the fountain-head, the waters ran clearly. Quietly, also, for his discourses were not brawling torrents, nor babbling brooks, but quiet streams—singularly so, yet none the less effective; all the more so, indeed, as—

"Still streams oft water fairest meadows."

That the most desirable results were accomplished in the Plymouth meadow by this clear and quiet ministry, is attested by the fact, that, under it the manifold graces of the church unfolded more and more continually, while scores upon scores of new disciples sprang up "as willows by the water-courses."

It is to be said, moreover, that these abundant results of spiritual culture were reached, notwithstanding the troublous times that had fallen upon the country, and were sorely distracting it; for the dark days of the Civil War filled most of the five and a half years of Mr. Helmer's ministry here.

Prior to the opening of the war, I had followed my old friend into the West, and settled at Kenosha, thirty-five miles below Milwaukee, on the Lake-shore. I saw him often, therefore, and talked with him much, and so can testify, from personal knowledge, to the discreet earnestness with which he aroused the patriotism of his citizen auditors, and afterward confirmed the church, from time to time, in its loyal position. In his address to the church, at the celebration of its quarter-century anniversary in 1866, Mr. Helmer said of that time: "My pastoral work here was during the rebellion, and during those troublous years it was never uncertain upon which side of the controversy you stood. You were unqualifiedly loyal to the government, and true to the cause of liberty and human rights. You gave of your means. You sent forth your young men armed. The noble women were tireless in their work of furnishing whatever would promote the comfort and health of the soldiers in hospital and camp. The sanitary and Christian commissions received your sympathy and aid."

Now let the present pastor of this church, the Rev. H. T. Rose, tell us how steadily and prosperously the church carried on its special work through those distracting times.

"The years of Mr. Helmer's ministry were marked by enterprise and arduous Christian work in the city. For years, during the war, the church sustained a daily morning prayer-meeting, a light so costly in devotion and sacrifice that few churches have ever been able to maintain it. These meetings were greatly vitalized by Mr. Helmer's presence and encouragement. As the fruit and evidence of faith, the influence of the church went out in many directions. The Sabbath schools were large and vigorous. A colony was sent off from the parent church and organized on Astor street, and a house built for it. The church of our faith on the south side was aided. An industrial school was maintained. The charities of the church were very large and far-reaching. Its social life was delightful. Among the Congregational churches of the State, this church, in respect to all the evidences of church life, held the highest place, and throughout the Northwest it was known as a great power in the Kingdom of Christ."

During this period both lights and shadows fell upon Mr. Helmer's personal path. In the earlier part of it, on the evening of Christmas Day in 1861, he was most happily married to one of the fairest of his flock, Miss Susan R. Bonnell, daughter of James Bonnell, Esq,. of

that city. I shall leave the Rev. Dr. Humphrey, a former pastor of the bride, who, with another, performed the ceremony, to speak more fully of this joyous event in his letter, which will be found in the latter part of this volume.

On the 31st of August, 1863, their first child, Charles Clarence, was born, but died on the same day. As I stood looking, with his father, on the beautiful little thing, he quietly said: "It just stepped upon this planet on its way to Heaven." Although the infant breathed but a few hours, its departure was a real sorrow to the father, for he loved little children dearly. Their fresh young life solaced him when careworn and weary. Hence he often sought their society, and they, in turn, would run across the street to meet him, and be held at his side by his affable ways with them and his cheery talk.

It was his habit also to refresh himself by exhilarating exercise, now strolling along the high bluff to enjoy its fine prospect of the lake, then taking an equestrian ride into the country, and not seldom tramping with his gun through the outlying marshes in quest of snipe or wild ducks.

Although his devotion to his pastoral work kept him much at home, he would occasionally be drawn away to attend some important meeting of the Trustees of Beloit College, of whom he was one, or to deliver a popular lecture in some one of the neighboring towns, always giving a rich intellectual feast, and sometimes causing the citizens of Milwaukee to be envied. And then those Eastern colleges with which he had been connected had not lost sight of their worthy son, laboring so silently on the western shore of Lake Michigan. In 1860 he was selected by the Chi Psi Fraternity of Hamilton to deliver the annual oration as its re-union in the summer of that year; and in 1862 he was unanimously chosen to read a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale, at its gathering during the Commencement week. This poem, which was judiciously fitted to the times, as its title, "The Stars and Stripes," will indicate, was listened to with marked attention, and afterwards put into print.

Three years later, in the early spring of 1865, Mr. Helmer received a tentative letter from an influential member of a prominent church in New York City. Was he so firmly fixed in his present position, and were his sympathies so fully enlisted with the West, that an invitation to this Eastern church could not move him? That his sympathies, at

this time, were woven more deeply than ever before into the West, his intimate friends all knew, as he was not only free, but enthusiastic, in expressing them; but they also knew, to their sorrow, that he was no longer, as for years he had seemed, immovably fixed in his Milwaukee pastorate. Not that he did not love his people there as strongly as ever; not that they were not still devoted as firmly as ever to him; but because an insidious disease had stolen in upon him, and was fast shaking him loose. This was the first assault of that malarial affection, to which, after a long, brave fight, he at length succumbed. For some time it had been making its encroachments upon his naturally strong constitution, and, in the autumn of 1864, had so weakened him that he was compelled to lay down his work for several months. But all the while, though suffering intensely at times, his remarkable hopefulness caused him to believe that he would soon be able to take it up again. In a corresponding hope the congregation waited patiently, and with a most tender solicitude, for the return of his health. But it did not come. Yet it might, after a while; so they continued to wait. At length, however, the still crippled pastor, "believing the welfare of the church to be involved by longer suspense, peremptorily insisted on withdrawing from his charge." With extreme reluctance the clinging church yielded to the inevitable, and, on the 31st of May, 1865, the double-and-twisted tie was severed.

How severely the church felt this enforced separation may be seen in the fact, that, as they expressed it in their parting words, "they had come to feel assured of the permanence of a union so happy and so fruitful of good;" and also in their expressed conviction that his health had been broken by over-work for them; for, said they: "We have not forgotten that your first severe prostration followed a season of unusual and sustained labor in our midst, and shall always feel misgivings that your later sufferings were the result of unremitting and excessive toil in our behalf."

They would always, therefore, affectionately cherish his memory, and never cease to importune God for blessings upon him and his beloved wife, and especially that He would grant the chief desire of his heart, by giving him strength to labor again in the vineyard.

VIII.

RECRUITING IMPAIRED HEALTH. [1865–1866.]

Leaving Milwaukee on the edge of summer, Mr. Helmer went to Lockport, N. Y., where a loved brother was residing, who had been a practicing physician, and placed himself under his care and that of a dear friend, Dr. S. T. Clarke. The consequence was, that he began at once to mend, and after a while was so far restored as to be able to resume preaching in a limited degree, which he did by supplying temporarily a vacant Presbyterian pulpit in the near city of Buffalo.

On the 9th of May, while yet in Milwaukee, he had received a second letter from the gentleman in New York City, respecting that still pastorless church, and on the 23d of August, another, from the same person on the same subject, reached him at Lockport. Nothing came of that urgent correspondence, however, doubtless because Mr. Helmer's health was not yet sufficiently confirmed.

On the 31st of May, 1866, came a letter from Governor Buckingham, of Norwich, Conn., expressing, in behalf of the Broadway Congregational Church of that city, an earnest desire that he should visit them at his earliest convenience. Two weeks later, Mr. B. (not having heard from him) wrote again, saying: "I beg to repeat the invitation, and to say that you would be received with great cordiality by those who know you by reputation; and we are very anxious that Providence shall direct your steps this way."

That letter drew a response from Mr. Helmer, in reply to which Governor Buckingham wrote, regretting that his engagements at that time did not permit him to visit them, and expressing the hope that he would yet be able to do so; assuring him that "the church and people were prepared to regard him with great favor."

On the 6th of July came still another letter from the same gentleman, which reads:

"You must pardon me for writing again, and for renewedly expressing, not only in my own behalf, but in behalf of many others, an earnest desire that before you shall make any permanent engagement you will visit this city. If you should come you will find . . . many true, honest and intelligent men, who earnestly desire that their fellow-citizens may, under the influence of the Gospel, be made better. Come and see if you cannot aid in such a work."

Although the gentleman had closed, "hoping to have a favorable reply," it was not so to be, as will appear from this, the last of his letters, written on the 14th of the same month:

Your esteemed favor of the 11th is at hand, and while I deeply regret that the Lord seems to have prevented those of us who know most of you from accomplishing our wishes, yet the reasons which you assign for your decision commend themselves to my judgment, and make it appear to be right that we should be disappointed. I, however, trust that you will soon be so fully restored to health with your former vigor, as to engage in a field larger than the one which it may be advisable for you to occupy now.

I am, with regard,

Your friend and obedient servant,

WM. A. BUCKINGHAM.

It was not many months before this larger field opened to Mr. Helmer, whose health was now so entirely confirmed, that he, after due deliberation, concluded to enter it, trusting confidently in God for the steady strength which its onerous duties would require.

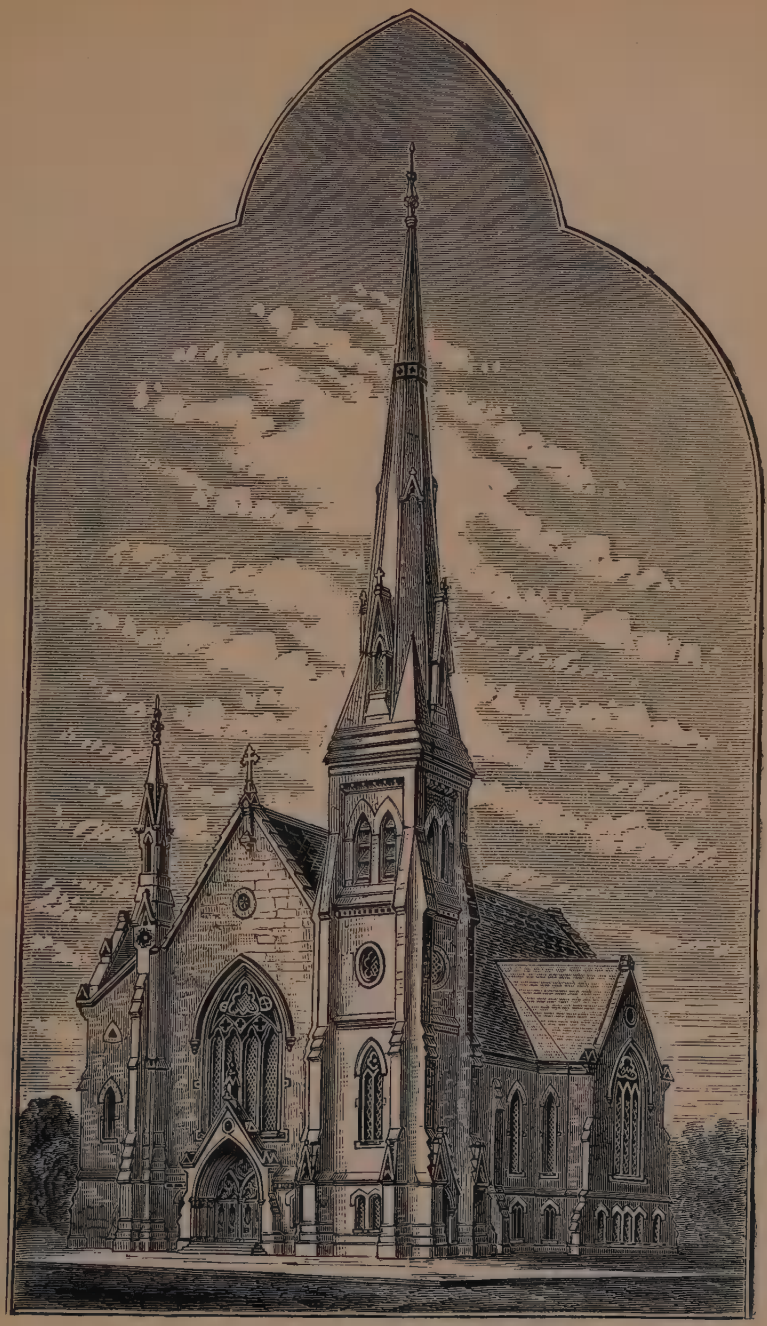
IX.

PASTOR OF UNION PARK CHURCH, CHICAGO. [1866–1875.]

It was in December of 1866 that he received a hearty call to the above-named Congregational church. A large field, indeed; not that the members of the church were many, for it was quite a little flock; nor that their house of worship was spacious and imposing, for it was nothing but a frame building of limited capacity, and homely at that. But the unpretentious structure was most advantageously located in one of the best cultured and most rapidly growing parts of the city; and, what was still more promising, its few worshipers were united and full of hope to the brim.

Starting out as a child of the neighboring Theological Seminary, it had, for three years, been so fortunate as to enjoy the services of Professors Haven, Fisk and Bartlett. At the end of that period, however, the congregation, with the advice of those three wise men, resolved to have one regular pastor, who could give them all his time and powers, and Mr. Helmer, whose good work in Milwaukee had become well known among them, was their decided choice.

Quick to appreciate the field in which he was called to labor, he at



UNION PARK CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL.

once pitched his tent there and went to work. For two years and a little more he preached in the old wooden church, drawing in new people from week to week until it had to be enlarged, and still drawing them in, until it was again so crowded that further enlargement was in contemplation, when, in the twilight of a February Sabbath, while the building was being heated for the evening service, it took fire, and in half an hour was reduced to ashes.

It was fortunate that the church, in this sudden emergency, had for its leader a far-seeing and brave man, and it was as fortunate for him that he had a plucky, self-sacrificing people. There they were, out on the street—on the street, literally, because the lot on which their burnt home had stood did not belong to them, having been only leased. Thus conditioned, a serious problem was staring them in the face. A new structure was to be erected, of course, and without delay; but *how*, and *on what scale? Somehow*, argued the pastor, and on a *large* scale, as they prayerfully talked it over. All soon came into the same way of thinking, and so it was quickly decided that they should do what their position seemed to demand, erect a commodious edifice, and in a style that would be worthy of the locality it was to occupy.

This heroic decision was reached within a week after the destruction of the old building. Ground for the new one was broken in May of that year, and in August the corner-stone was laid. On May-day of the next year the finished basement was occupied, and in November the large and costly edifice was completed and dedicated to the worship of God.

To the dedication services many persons, of all denominations, were drawn from every division of the city, attracted largely by a curiosity to see a church, which, in its interior arrangements, had made a noticeable departure from the current forms of ecclesiastical architecture. The novel appearance of the spacious auditorium was largely the result of Mr. Helmer's wishes and suggestions, who, in the course of his sermon, said, "he was opposed to Protestant churches imitating the forms of Catholic cathedrals, when their ideas were so far apart, and their forms of service so different. A Protestant service was a social worship, and the amphitheatre was the best form for them, and not long-drawn aisles, dim shadows, and resounding echoes. If the builders of theatres had adopted an amphitheatrical form, was it any reason

why the children of light should not do so? They wanted an auditorium in which to hear and see . . . and thought a semi-circle could be consecrated as well as a rectangle."

Standing in this unique audience-room, which was capable of seating over two thousand worshipers, Mr. Helmer could now speak from his low and open platform to uncommon advantage. And never was he more eager to proclaim the great truths of the Gospel than at this time, which in many respects was peculiarly in need of their controlling and shaping influence.

The civil war, but recently over, had left the national life in a state of commotion, which was constantly casting up new questions of public concern to be answered, and fresh problems to be solved; on every side, too, were morals loosened by the license of the war, that needed to be tightened. From the same source, moreover, a mad, ruinous spirit of speculation had sprung up, and was sweeping away thousands; and besides, the prevailing spirit of the time was material. The great city in which Mr. Helmer's lot had now been cast was pre-eminently a whirlpool of commercial enterprise and industrial activity. Never, therefore, since the landing of the Pilgrims, had the Christian ministers of this country been called with so loud a voice to infuse an intelligent, thoughtful and constant religious influence into the public mind and conscience.

That was a time, then, and Chicago was the place, for a genuine man, like Mr. Helmer, to stand up in a manly independence, and speak out plainly, yet winsomely, in behalf of "whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*." To help make men really and entirely Christians was more than ever, if that was possible, the one supreme end and all-embracing purpose of his ministrations. Certain it is, that the style of his preaching was now shaped more carefully than ever to this end; for in the delivery of his discourse he had changed largely from the written to the oral form, as being more effective, and then, as he afterwards said to an Eastern friend: "It was here [in Chicago] that I found in my heart an unsanctified pride over elegant sermonizing and elocutionary effects, and to find it was to dispel it, and to teach the Gospel in its greatest simplicity, became my only aim in life."

The simplicity of his preaching was, nevertheless, as far as possible

from that of a shallow mind, or a narrow one. Indeed, he thought more deeply than ever now, and more broadly, yet always clearly, for his soul was filled with a luminous faith in God and the things of God, which seems never to have been clouded, nor even dimmed by a doubt. What, then, if his adventurous mind, not content with coasting along the shore of the illimitable truth of God, launched out upon the open sea! Keeping his hand upon the helm and his eye on the star, he sailed the broad waters safely to himself, and traversed them with great profit to his people; for he returned from every voyage laden with spiritual nourishment for them. If he went into the regions of mystery, it was to clear away from his subject all bewildering difficulties, so that he might present it plainly to their minds, and apply it effectively to their hearts. If he took hold of German metaphysics, it was to husk them until he got at the parts that could be made serviceable to his hearers. If he put all nature, all passing events, all art, literature and science under contribution, it was the better to unfold and illustrate his practical ideas for the same high purpose of *feeding the flock of God.* This was his loved vocation. Above all things else, he was a *pastor.*

It is in this relation that Mr. Helmer is represented in the engraving on one of the first pages of this volume. This cut is from a cartoon that was prepared by an artistic member of his church for a reception given to him on his return from the National Council of the Congregational Churches, held at Boston in the Fall of 1874, to which he was a delegate. And what better representation of the true character of the man could have been conceived? Here is the shepherd, with his familiar face of love, returning to his expectant, eager flock, with both arms full of nourishing food. Nor are the lamb and the kid to be neglected. No high theological palisade has kept them from his care. They have not been left out until their thinking powers shall have become strong enough to leap a five-rail fence of abstract doctrines. It is enough that they are hungry. So they shall be fed with the rest, and all abundantly.

It is to be said, however, that the truth he dealt to them might not always have been as agreeable as he could have desired. But, if he felt that he was called to give it, he would do so with unshrinking fidelity, however adverse it might be to his milder inclinations. On one occasion, for instance, he felt impelled to speak out plainly his

views on Future Punishment. It was not a pleasant task for his gentle nature to perform, and at the close of the discourse his tender emotions made themselves visible in tears that trickled down his cheeks, and in a nervous exhaustion that compelled him to lean upon the desk for support, while he told his people, with a tremulous voice, how much he preferred to bring to them the infinite *love* of God and commend it to their hearts.

This incident has been recorded chiefly because it reveals his tender-heartedness—the great depth of his emotional nature. It was not often that he gave way so perceptibly to his pathetic feelings, and just because they were so easily moved to excess, he could not trust them for moderation. Hence he was in the habit of suppressing them in public, even at the risk of seeming not to possess them. But in private they came out as clearly and sweetly as mountain waters whenever they were really called for, as many of his people who suffered affliction during his pastorate can testify from well-remembered conversations or cherished letters, in which he solaced them with heart-deep words of purest sympathy.

To those parents from whom little ones had been taken away he could speak out of a kindred experience, for, as in Milwaukee, so in Chicago, he had been called to lay a new-born babe in the green bosom of the earth. Bruce Hathorn was its name. This was in the spring of 1873. But two other children that came earlier to him in Chicago, Faith in 1867, and Ernest in 1869, lived to be constant joys to him, and for which he was unceasingly grateful to his Heavenly Father, as appears from some of his beautiful letters to and about them, which I have been allowed to read.

In this devotion to his children Mr. Helmer was treading in the footsteps of his own father, whose well-remembered influence is disclosed in the following extract from a letter of sympathy, written to a member of his congregation whose reverend sire had recently died. After alluding to the event, he adds:

"It recalled to my mind very vividly the thought of my own father, who is now far advanced in life, and must, in the natural course of events, soon be called to his rest. The thought came to me with special power, also, knowing that your father, like mine, was a true Christian man, eminent for his religious life and character. To have

such a father, with his Christian example and influence, and his religious training, seems to me more than all the accumulations of wealth. And the older I grow the more I appreciate this."

Returning now to his public labors, we find that they were not limited to his own immediate charge, but that his wide range of thought and broad sympathies extended them in every direction through lectures and the press. As a public lecturer he was quite popular and effective, always trying to give a right direction to the great revolutions of thought and life that were going on around him by the application of Christian ethics, and boldly attacking such monstrous abuses as "Rings." Sometime in 1871 his pronounced catholic spirit caused him to become associated with several other distinguished clergymen of as many denominations in the editorial conduct of a new religious paper, fitly called the *Alliance*, and for a long time many of its choicest articles, both in prose and verse, were from his classic and graceful pen. He was also an occasional and always welcome contributor to the Advance, the Independent, and other religious papers and magazines. One of his articles, entitled "Divine Arithmetic," to be found among his prose writings in this volume, drew from the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, whom it overtook in Colorado, the following appreciative note:

"I remember so well a pleasant conversation with you one evening in Chicago, that I am emboldened to write you, and tell you how deeply interested I have been to-day in reading your article on 'Divine Arithmetic,' in the September S. S. Teacher. It seems very simple and unanswerable, as you state it. But the arithmetic of the Rule of Faith had not occurred to me before, as you state it, so plainly and demonstratively."

But his interest in all that concerned the general welfare of society never impeded his steady walk among his own people; nor were his literary pursuits, always kept up, ever allowed to be a detriment to his distinctive religious work. It was because he could not find time for it, that he did not yield to the repeated solicitations of friends to prepare some of his many poems for the press.

Of the details of his pastoral work there are no records, for he never preached anniversary sermons. It was not in him to make yearly exhibits of what he had been doing. "I have no taste for them," he once said to his people. "There are people so constituted

as to be able to keep a diary. I never could. Book-keeping I can understand; and I can appreciate history; but to reel off one's own daily thoughts and doings, and then be required to read them, seems to me a punishment rather than a privilege. . . . Some pastors are excellent at keeping accounts of their work, and this may be well enough for them; but somehow my nature and education seem especially defective in this respect. I have not the least idea how many pastoral calls I have made, nor how many sick people I have visited, nor how many meetings I have attended, nor how many times I have spoken or prayed in public. Hence, when I review the past five years [the first five of his Chicago ministry], you must not be disappointed if such statistics as these are wanting."

A little further on he says: "So far as our internal affairs are concerned, a few things might be said; but it is well to remember the Divine precept, to maintain a reasonable amount of ignorance between the right and the left hand, when they are trying to do good. I will just say in general, that four hundred persons have united with this church, during this period; and that from a congregation of two hundred we have grown to what we are to-day." Again: "I can hardly venture to touch, in so public a manner, the more delicate passages of this history, where the tenderest and most sacred sensibilities of the human heart are involved. The church is like the home. There are many things we cannot talk about on the corners of the streets. We have sweet May memories of beautiful little children, here consecrated in the rite of baptism. We have joyous recollections of spiritual espousals, whose bridegroom was the dear Lord himself. And our minds sit in the shadows of remembered trials, sorrows and sufferings."

Among these trials was one of an external nature, which must be mentioned—the heavy debt which the church had unexpectedly been obliged to carry along through one year after another, in consequence of the disastrous fire that, in 1871, consumed a large part of the city. As the church was located in the West Division, it was not reached by the flames; but the business places of the congregation were. Yet the brave people, though "cast down," were not "dismayed." In alluding to this calamity, Mr. Helmer said: "The great fire came upon us before the details of the house were all finished. But it was like some huge wave of the sea, that strikes a steamer

square on her bow, making her tremble and seem to hesitate for an instant; but the wheels did not stop, nor the fire go down in the engine-room." As the stricken city began to recover, the indebtedness of this congregation began to be reduced, and more and yet more, from time to time; not only by strenuous efforts on the part of the gentlemen, but also, and largely, by the self-denying exertions of the ladies, be it here recorded to their lasting credit.

That Mr. Helmer's far-reaching and salutary influence throughout the Northwest should have been recognized and honored by its foremost college, was not at all surprising; nor was it very surprising to those who knew how he shrank from the least semblance of artificial dignity, that he respectfully declined the title of Doctor of Divinity, which Beloit College, in 1875, held out to him; and that, too, notwithstanding the handsome letter which its President, in behalf of the Board of Trustees, wrote him, in which he said it was

". . . . in token of their appreciation of your efforts for these many years past in this region to preach a sound and pure gospel, and to establish in the hearts and over the lives of men the supremacy of that faith which works by love for the world's redemption. It was meant, not as a vain compliment, but as a deserved testimonial, and as such we hope the infliction will be kindly received and meekly borne."

If the adverse convictions of Mr. Helmer had not been well rooted in his honest heart, he could hardly have stood out against such words as these. How deeply they were rooted there, will be seen in this part of his reply:

"I do not know how to interpret Mathew 23: 8, 9, 10, in any other way than as a prohibition of such titular dignities. . . . After a renewed study of this passage, made in view of the present instance as related to myself, I am unable to reach any different conclusion. Indeed, I go still further, and would be better satisfied to have the title of *Reverend*, so commonly applied to ministers of the Gospel, dispensed with; for it is only the thin end of the wedge, the thick end of which is—Pope. If, moreover, it is deemed important, in a republic like ours, to guard against the intrusion of aristocratic titles among democrats, quite as important would it seem to be that Christian ministers, who constitute a level brotherhood, and not an ascending hierarchy, should not receive titles that are borrowed from a secular order based upon principles radically different."

Of course he was criticised. He expected to be. But that could not prevent him from being true to his own convictions of what was proper for him, in this, as in everything else; and they would not allow him, who was so radically and thoroughly democratic, to encourage even the slightest fancied opening to an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

It was Mr. Helmer's habit to break loose from his arduous duties occasionally, and give himself over to diverting sports in the field or on the water; and whenever he did so, it was with the utmost *abandon*. He was particularly fond of angling, and quite an adept with his rod. I used to sit with him, often for hours together, in the same boat on Fox Lake, noticing the enthusiasm with which he would pursue his favorite sport. And the other gentlemen of the party were always delighted with his society, he was so genial and full of good humor. It is not an uncommon thing for them now to speak of the ease with which he would enter into the various chats that enlivened the noons and evenings on shore. He was wont to notice the rough boatmen, too, and to talk freely with them of their affairs. And then, what a devoted lover of Nature he showed himself to be! How he did court her in her varying moods! He was constantly charmed. I recall how once, as we were floating together down Fox River, near one of its picturesque shores, as the summer sun was going down, he was lured from all thought of his trolling-line by the restful evening sounds—the peculiar cadence of the reed birds in the wild rice, and the music of the frogs [for to him it was music], "playing their castanets," as he put it.

But despite these occasional recreations and all other measures for keeping up his health, it at length began to go down. In the autumn of 1874 he was severely attacked by the same disease that had driven him away from Milwaukee. From the smouldering embers of that old malarial fever the fire broke out anew, and flamed up fiercely, from time to time, during the following winter and spring, and into the summer; when he went to Saratoga Springs for his annual rest.

A few months before this, on the 17th of April, an infant daughter had come into the family, and on the 17th of August we find him writing a characteristic letter from Saratoga to his wife, respecting the name of the new-comer, in which he says:

". . . The fact is, that Grace has the same relation to our *inner life* as had Faith and Ernest, and nothing could be stronger than my

feeling, that Grace is exactly that which expresses the one thing most prominent in this part of our life. How did we walk by faith, before darling Fay was born! and were we not in earnest from that time on to do our work in Chicago? . . . . And then, besides, for myself, I am powerfully impressed with the conviction, that I am to have *more grace*, yea, sufficient to enable me to live better than before. . . . . I cannot tell you how deep in my soul lies this whole matter of naming the children."

The better life to which Mr. Helmer aspired was to have been lived, as he supposed, in his dear old field at Chicago, to which he returned, with greatly improved health, in early September. But no sooner was he back than he was again prostrated. By the advice of his medical attendants, he then sought a temporary change from the climate of the interior to that of the sea-board. Hardly had he reached the ocean air before he was relieved. The good result was so nearly instantaneous, that it seemed almost magical. Then ought he not to remain there permanently? Could he return to Chicago with safety? But how could he give up his loved Union Park Church? Yet might it not be best for the church, as well as for himself, that he should? Writing to his wife from New York on the 2d of November, he says:

"When I think of leaving Chicago, my heart sinks. . . . . Have we not been praying for weeks and months, 'Lord, direct our way.' Have we, then, really come to another chapter in our book of life?"

Again, on the 6th, after speaking of his "continued respite from pain," and saying, "each day seems to be adding to my stock of strength," he continues:

"Such a morning as this is! clear, bright, glorious, genial! I have been sunning myself in Madison Square, and listening there, among the chirping and fluttering sparrows, to our Lord's sermon, Math. 10: 29-31, and have come back to my room very much becalmed and comforted. I do not yet *see* at all which way the Lord is leading me, but am entirely sure that it is in the right direction, and have no will or care about it beyond the desire to be in a leadable state of mind and heart."

On the 15th of the same month he again wrote to his wife, saying:

"I sympathize with you entirely in your strong feeling upon the

question of leaving Union Park Church. And if I felt any kind of assurance that I could go back there and live in comfortable health, I would at once . . . make my preparations to go home. But just here is the difficulty: I have a singular dread of going back to the Lake-shore, even for a month. . . . I am sorry that it is so, but cannot help it. And surely were it not for the Union Park people, I would never think for a moment of returning permanently to Chicago."

Still another letter to her, penned on the 19th, contains the following lines on the same subject:

"As to going back permanently, or for the winter, I do feel as if I could not. Somehow, during these weeks of absence, I have quite failed to bring my mind to the *sticking point*. And yet I have tried to; have thought it over and over and over by myself here, day and night, in all sorts of moods, awake and half asleep, hungry and full, lively and dull, and always with one result. . . . . I will not deny, however, that this conclusion has been reached through some struggle with natural feelings. When I come face to face with the final sundering of the tender ties that bind us to Chicago, my heart shrinks a little, yes, a good deal; and I feel a pang that makes me quiver. The attachment of the people, their own sorrow over me, the outlooking thought of how it may turn out with them, make it very hard. . . . . It is for us to face the future, trusting in God. 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He *shall bring it to pass*.' You and I will accept *this word* as the solid ground for our feet, as we go forth again. In the beginning it was, 'according to your *faith* be it unto you.' We have now come where it is, 'my *grace* is *sufficient* for thee.'" [Alluding again to the children's names.]

With these feelings, Mr. Helmer made a flying trip to Chicago, and, on Sunday, the 12th of December, preached his last sermon in Union Park Church. At the close of the discourse he asked his friend, Professor Hyde, to read his letter of resignation. With extreme reluctance the church accepted it, and a council dissolved his pastoral connection on the 20th of the same month, just nine years to a day after his installation.

Nine years of faithful and judicious work, by which he had brought that hopeful enterprise up from its infancy into a vigorous manhood, and given it a permanent place among the leading churches of the city.

Just before leaving New York on his brief and painful journey to the West, Mr. Helmer had written to his wife :

"I have been in a struggle here for two or three weeks, and I think I can say truly, that seldom, if ever, has the goodness of the Lord, his tenderness and fidelity, his loving care and his brooding nearness been so vivid and real. I have not been alone: there have been moments of unusual exaltation. And all the light I have seen has shone from one direction and upon one point."

Again, on his way back, he wrote from Lockport, N. Y., on the 19th of December:

". . . . That instinct which I felt in New York, against going back West at all, was fully justified by the results of the experiment. . . . The crisis has come and the turning-point has been passed; we are to make trial of another locality. And I believe, as clearly and firmly as I ever believed any thing, that the hand of the Lord is in it—yes, that it is his will and way for us."

X.

PASTOR OF TOMPKINS AVENUE CHURCH, BROOKLYN. [1876–1878.]

This was the new field referred to by Mr. Helmer in the last quoted extract from his correspondence with his wife. He had been urgently invited to occupy it as a pastor on the 8th of November, and on the 16th of December, before returning from Chicago, had accepted the call.

"The Tompkins Avenue region," said one of the local papers at this time, "is, beyond all contradiction, the most striking and notable suburb of Brooklyn, within the same radius from the City Hall. It lies just where it is best and most happily sheltered from the sea winds of the Great South Bay." Hence it had become a pleasant retreat for some of the best people of Brooklyn. Naturally enough, then, an attractive church edifice had risen among its "large variety of comfortable and beautiful homes."

The church occupying this edifice was of recent formation, having been organized less than six months before the advent of Mr. Helmer. He had previously visited the field, had looked it all over with a careful eye, and had become convinced that it was worthy of the best culture. He had become equally impressed with the con-

viction that the Lord had called him to be the husbandman, as the following extracts from letters to his wife, who yet remained in Chicago, will reveal. The first, written on the 15th of November, reads:

"As to Brooklyn, I feel very much as I did about Chicago, when Mr. B. and Mr. F. came to Milwaukee with the call. You remember I was at first quite disinclined, but presently had the consciousness that it might be, after all, the Lord's will. This has come in such a way, and grows upon my estimation so much, that at present I would not dare say no, lest I had simply uttered my own will."

The second, bearing date of November 19th, runs thus:

"I am satisfied to-day, that, with the blessing of God, that church will *at once* take a good position among the churches of Brooklyn. Meanwhile, too, I have not been able to bring myself to the point of positively declining the call. There has not been a day or an hour when I would have dared [morally] to take that responsibility. You and I believe in Divine guidance. We have had abundant occasion to trust in the Lord, and have had from Him most blessed assurances, from time to time, that have *never* disappointed us. . . . Our going to Chicago, etc., have all been occasions for testing this principle. Now in this call to Brooklyn I have had precisely the same inward assurance, so far as I can judge. . . . It seems to me the way of the Lord. I have tried, while here, to find out the mind of the Lord for us, honestly, with the desire to know His will and do it. I feel about this just as I did about leaving Hartford for Milwaukee and Milwaukee for Chicago; neither of which has ever given a moment of uncertainty, much less regret."

Within a month he accepted this call, with the understanding that he would begin his labors on the first Sabbath of January, 1876. On the evening of the last Sabbath in December he attended service at the church of Dr. Crosby, in New York, and had a striking experience, which he thus described to his absent wife in a letter written before retiring to rest:

"Dr. Crosby was commenting upon Paul's arrest, scourging, and imprisonment, as described in the 21st and 22d chapters of the Acts. I was much interested all the way through. But, to my surprise, just as he was closing, he made this singular *practical application* to his auditors; he said, 'these events led to Paul's imprisonment; but

TOMPKINS AVENUE CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

this imprisonment enabled him to preach the gospel in places where *otherwise* he could *not have* done it. And so to you, my hearers, there may be trials, that hedge you up, and seem to hinder and thwart; but they are God's will and way for you, whereby it shall be better for you, and enable you to do *more for Him.*' This was the drift and strain of his remarks; and they came upon me with such overwhelming power that I burst into tears in spite of myself, and it seemed as if God was speaking through the preacher every word for me, almost as if the man was simply a mouth-piece; and immediately he began to pray, and the prayer was just the same; he could not have prayed for me more exactly had he known my case as well as I know it myself. I cannot describe the agitation of my spirit. What people about thought of me I do not know. Not waiting for the benediction, lest I should face them, I rushed out and came to my room. They sang, in closing, the 986th hymn of our Songs for the Sanctuary, which brought the climax. I know I have only made a muddle of what I wanted to say. But on this *last Sunday night before I go to Brooklyn*, has not God sent a sunbeam to comfort and strengthen me? . . . Is it not God's whisper that I yet may do something more for Him? Bruised, broken, torn up by the roots in Chicago, the goodness of God is yet in it and over it all. So it seems to me to-night."

The Tompkins Avenue people had previously heard Mr. Helmer, and had recognized his superior worth. They had heard him strike the keynote of his preaching, when he discoursed to them on "The Decisive Power of Actual Experience as the Basis of Faith." First facts, then theories, he had said. "If one wants to know whether the Bible is *true*, let him *try* it." The prospect of such preaching as this—that preaching from a deep and clear experience of revealed truth which is always the most satisfactory, caused his announced coming to be anticipated by a rapid renting of the pews.

In reading his letter of acceptance, addressed fraternally to his "Dear Brethren and Friends," we find that this young Brooklyn church has indeed secured our old friend of "Plymouth" and "Union Park." The same large conception of the work of the Christian Church is seen shining through every sentence, and the same hearty devotion to the work on his part is found throbbing in every line. Here is the closing sentence: "In accepting your invitation, which I do, trusting in God and confiding in you, it is with the hope that a

Christian church may be built up on the New Testament basis, that shall bless humanity and honor the Lord Jesus Christ."

This was the bugle-call with which he sought to rally his new people ; and not in vain, for under his wise direction the different departments of church work were at once organized and put into active operation. Among other things, he encouraged the organization of a Young People's Association, of which he was the first president, and to whose social and literary entertainments he helpfully contributed from time to time. And in all the activities of the church he took a vigorous part, notwithstanding his limited strength.

That he might be in the best condition to help form the habits and establish the customs of the young church, not only in a spiritual way, but also in the development of its social sympathies, mutual love, and hospitality to strangers, Mr. Helmer took steps, as early as in February, 1876, to have his church connection transferred from Chicago to Brooklyn, although it naturally cost some sacrifice of personal feelings, as will appear from his letter to one of the deacons of the Union Park Church, in which he requested letters for Mrs. H. and himself to the Tompkins Avenue Church. Said he :

> We both feel reluctant to make this request, because we wish to cling as long as possible to the dear old church. . . . But in the present stage of our work here there seem to be valid reasons why it is better for us to be identified with this church. Mrs. H. and myself have talked it over again and again, each time shrinking from taking a step that will seem to, although really it will not, separate us more from our old friends. I want you to *see* and *know* that we have not lost our profound interest in the Union Park Church. The Lord send you a good man speedily.
>
> Love to the brotherhood.
>
> Affectionately, C. D. HELMER.

On the 12th of the next month they entered into covenant with the other members of the church ; on which occasion, the pastor closed his discourse by saying : " For us, then, just beginning our existence as a Christian church, the one vital and essential thing is to have the Spirit of Christ in us as individuals and among us as members of this regenerate brotherhood, in order that we ourselves may have life and power to glorify God and do good unto men, and reflect from our character and works that Original Light, by which the world is to be enlightened unto everlasting life."

Leading off in this direction, Mr. Helmer went on, with all his mind and soul and strength, although it was not till the 28th of March,

1877, that he was formally installed over the church, when the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher preached the sermon on "The Life Force in Men,"—"the very first installation sermon that I ever really *wanted* to preach," he had written to his friend.

But with the joy of this public occasion was mingled the gloom of a private sorrow, that had recently clouded his sunny home. Less than three weeks before (on the 10th of that month), his little daughter Grace, an uncommonly pretty and interesting child, had sickened and passed away. Yet grace to steady and sustain the afflicted parents did not leave them, as may be inferred from the tone of two letters to some friends who had been similarly bereaved. To the father and mother, from whom a "dear little Mary" had been taken, he wrote :

". . . . Do not suppose that I forget you are Christians, having the grace of God in your hearts and the light of heaven upon your thoughts. . . . Your hope is bright, and the sweet little spirit that for nine years has been shining like a star in your home, now shines for you in heaven . . . . 'for of *such* is the *kingdom* of Heaven.' You know that we are able, from our own sad but rich experience, to mourn with your mourning and weep with your tears. . . . And yet Jesus our Lord is the sun of righteousness, and the beams of his love shining upon our tears fling the bow of promise and hope upon the darkest clouds of our trouble. With you now, as with ourselves, the majority of our children are in Heaven . . . . and we can confidently leave them with Jesus. And what joyous greetings are thus being prepared for us, when our hour of deliverance comes."

To the parents of another translated child, a bright, promising boy of seven summers, Mr. Helmer sent to Chicago, where they were residing in his old parish, a long letter overflowing with tenderness, from which I will venture to give the following lines :

"The Comforter will bring to your recollection what our Lord said : 'Their *angels* do *always* behold the *face* of my Father in Heaven;' which means, as I understand it, that our children who are taken from us here, are placed under the guardianship and care of angels appointed of God to watch over them in their heavenly life ; and those angels have ready access to our Heavenly Father. To me this utterance of our Lord has been an unspeakably great comfort. And I know, too, there is a peculiar blessing for those who have children in

heaven. May you, dear friends, come into the full understanding and appreciation of all that is signified in this. I feel that I am permitted to weep with you in your sorrow. The dear boy, gone to the better land, bore my name. That name is in the Lamb's Book of Life now, and the thought of it affects me in a new and peculiar manner. . . . I desire to assure you of my deep and warm sympathy, and to mingle my words of heartfelt grief with yours; to mourn with you as you mourn for your only son, even while my eyes, like yours, are gazing into the opened heavens where your dear Charlie, and even mine, by your kindness, has entered, to be glorious and blessed forever in his angel life."

Returning, now, to his Brooklyn parish, we find him hard at work, but living, as he afterwards expressed it, too near the margin of his health. Once we see him breaking away for a few days, that he may deliver an address before "The Porter Rhetorical Society of Andover Theological Seminary," and while at home his poetic fancy is still constantly on the wing. About this time one of his fugitive pieces is caught by Mr. Longfellow and caged in his last volume of "Poems of Places," a handsome recognition of his lyric worth. This ode to the "Battle of Oriskany" Mr. Helmer read to me, at my request, on a summer day in 1877, as we sat together, overlooking the sea from the shore of Martha's Vineyard. Although he was suffering much that day, more than he would let me know, yet I little thought that I was communing with him for the last time, and that, when I parted with him in the evening, I was feeling the touch of a hand soon to vanish.

It ought now to be said, that, in order to insure the fullest success of his ministrations, Mr. Helmer had had the audience room of his Brooklyn Church re-modeled from its rectangular to a semi-circular arrangement, similar to that which had been adopted by his church in Chicago. When the transformation was effected, it was pronounced to have one of the most attractive and beautiful interiors in the city. While re-dedicating this auditorium, Mr. Helmer said of his pulpit, which was without enclosure or bulwark, "The modern platform signifies that the preacher is not a *priest*, but one of the brotherhood; whose only sanctity comes from his character and his work. If that is venerable he may be revered. The preacher's power is one of influence rather than authority."

What the influence of this teaching member of the brotherhood might have been, had not his labors been repeatedly checked by his

old malady, and in less than two years stopped short, those who remember his marked success at Milwaukee and in Chicago can easily imagine. The story of those two brief years was the story of a brave, manly fight with the inexorable disease on his part, and on the part of his people the story of a long, patient waiting and rare sympathy, which will never be forgotten by his family and host of friends. Again and again they released him from his labors, and when, soon after his return from Martha's Vineyard, in the early autumn of 1877, he was found still quite incapacitated for the work crowding in upon him, they considerately offered, and urged him to take, as long a vacation as should be found necessary for the restoration of his health. As he himself had now reached the conclusion that a protracted cessation from toil and care was imperative, he thankfully accepted their generous offer. Before leaving Brooklyn he wrote to a clerical friend at Bethlehem, in the White Mountains :

"These dark and trying hours are the ones that develop faith, and, by eclipsing the earth-lights, enable us to see the stars in the heavens. The ministry of pain is beneficent, though severe; but to me the hedging in, the thwarting, the compulsory inactivity, the being left behind in hospital while the army is marching on to conflict—these things are less tolerable to the natural man than even physical suffering. I have often thought of what you alluded to in the life of Paul, who, when he enquired, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*' was commanded to go to a certain place and wait for further orders. And the answer was, 'I will show him *how great things he must suffer.*' It is comparatively easy to *do*, but to endure patiently, this tests the spiritual condition."

How well he bore this test may be seen in what he wrote his wife from Saratoga on the 2d of December, after he had been out taking the air and sunlight in the pine woods beyond the White Sulphur Springs :

". . . . While walking through the grove, in the delightful solitude, with the recollection that it was Sunday, it seemed a strange Providence that I should be there instead of in my pulpit, where I so much desire to be. I do not understand it; but I have found rest to my mind in the fact that the Lord permits it to be so *for some good reason.* For a while I found it very difficult to submit without question, accepting it simply as the will of God concerning me. *But I*

have ceased to worry or be anxious. After all, we must learn that the only way to live is by *faith*, simple trust in our Heavenly Father, day by day and hour by hour. The words of our Lord are constantly ringing in my ears, 'Take no thought for the morrow;' 'ye are of more value than many sparrows;' 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' . . . To be sure I cannot help thinking many times about the church, how much it needs attention in these days especially, and what a precious opportunity there seems to be just now to do work. . . . Nevertheless the Lord is able to honor his own name and bless the church without me, and perhaps more in my absence than in any other way. And so I no longer worry. . . . I hope, however, I shall be permitted before a great while to be with you again, and to be at work."

I was expecting to quote also, and largely, from a letter penned at this time to one of his parishioners, respecting the problem of his sudden and complete disability as related to the interests of their "dear church;" but when, toward the end, I came to the words: "These are secrets of my soul before God, and they are sacred and precious to me; I would not for the world fling them upon the winds; they are not written to be read aloud," what could I do but refrain? Suffice it to say, that the long letter breathes throughout a tender, yearning love for that young church, and a prayerful, self-sacrificing devotion to the glory of God through it, which, if disclosed on this page, would be a new revelation, even to those who knew him best.

In a subsequent letter to his wife, dated Dec. 16th, we see indications of returning strength and rising spirits.

". . . I have just returned from a stroll into the pine grove out near the Excelsior Spring, my favorite resort on a pleasant day. Just think of walking out a mile or more at this time of year on the dry grass, and partly green at that! How I do love the pine woods! Perhaps because it was in the midst of them my earliest boyhood was spent. And perhaps for the same reason it is, that, whenever I am in such a scene now, my feelings all take on the form of religion. It is not simply nature—it is God. It puts me in the frame of prayer quite as much as any church I ever enter. Nowhere do I feel more devout than in a forest, or among the mountains. And so, all alone, and yet not alone, I have just enjoyed one of these rare experiences,

I always come from them quickened, up-lifted, and strengthened. . . . . So the day has passed; and I have been thankful for my returning strength, and all the blessings I am enjoying. One good symptom is a buoyancy of spirit such as is natural to me, but which for a long time has been repressed by disease and nervous prostration."

And yet his people, with unwearied patience, saw the winter pass by without his return, and the spring, and the summer. But at the beginning of autumn, on the 15th of September, he reappeared among them.

Before leaving the White Mountains, where the latter part of the summer had been spent, Mr. Helmer took the Cup of Gethsemane for the subject on which first to address his waiting church. His wife tried again and again to dissuade him from presenting that sorrowful topic on an occasion that seemed to demand a joyous theme, such as he had been accustomed to bring back from his seasons of rest. But the impression that he ought to carry back that message was so strong upon him that he could not ignore it. Nor was he to be turned from his purpose, when, upon entering the prayer-meeting on Friday evening, he heard the slight murmur of applause which the younger members of the congregation could not repress; nor when, on the Sabbath, he saw the profuse flowers and vines with which all the people were expressing their great joy at his return.

Here it is to be said that, while in his former pastorates Mr. Helmer's favorite themes were of the more cheerful character, as faith, love, joy; in Brooklyn, his mind turned almost constantly to sorrow and the consolations of Heaven. Here are some of his subjects during this period: "Partakers of Christ's Sufferings," Phil. i., 29; "The Functions of Sorrow," 2d Cor., vii., 8–11; "God's Sympathy with our Human Weakness," Mark, iv., 38; "Divine Sympathy with Human Sufferings," John, ii., 3; "Celestial Visions," 2d Cor., xii., 1–5; "Heavenly Mansions," John xiv., 2; "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God," Math., v., 8; "Personal Presence of Christ in Heaven," Rev., xxii., 3–4. And now it is "The Ministry of Suffering," a discourse drawn from his own severe, often fiery, pains during the eleven months of absence. It is to be regretted that some of these pathetic discourses, drawn from a deep fountain of tenderness, could not have reappeared in this volume;

but none of them, none of his Brooklyn sermons, were written out. Beginning with full notes, they ended with a succession of leading sentences or suggestive words, just enough to guide his thought.

During the afternoom of that Sunday, so full of joyful anticipations to his people, Mr. Helmer had a sinking turn, from which, at the hour for evening service, he rallied sufficiently to go to the church and briefly address the children, who had assembled with music and banners to greet him. After that he did not enter the pulpit again until the first Sunday in December, and then only to baptize six little ones. That done, he descended from the platform, and his public ministry was ended! He never mounted the pulpit stairs again.

A letter, resigning his charge, was immediately sent to the church, and, after a few weeks, accepted with profoundest regret.

So Mr. Helmer parted with this young church which he loved so dearly, after less than two years of active service; but not until he had cast it in a mould of Christian charity and fellowship that it can never lose, and laid the foundation for a superstructure of usefulness, that will rise there as a monument to his memory.

XI.

LAST DAYS. [1878–1879.]

From Brooklyn Mr. Helmer removed with his family to Lockport, where his pains increased, and not seldom reached an intensity that was excruciating, notwithstanding the tenderest nursing of his devoted wife, and the most skillful attentions of his medical brother, combined with those of a physician who was next to a brother—the gentleman who appears in this volume as the editor of his poems.

Our distressed friend was now filling up the measure of his suffering, which seemed already to have reached the brim. And still he endured it all with a Christian fortitude that was marvelous. During these last months much of his talk with his attending physician was concerning the ministry of pain, or physical suffering, as a discipline. He would occasionally break out in this strain: "Why, Clark, I have suffered until I could not feel myself ache, when nature would furnish its own anæsthetic, and I believe if a soul like mine were to be subjected to everlasting torment, it would be annihilated." Again he would say: "Oh, dear, will not Susie and the children think of me,

when I am gone, rather as an embodied groan than as one who thinks of them as embodied grace and sweetness?"

Sometimes, in his familiar conversations with this gentleman, he would talk about his glorified babes, and question if they could not see his distress and minister to it. He is remembered to have said that he was quite sure Gracie was often at her mother's right hand when she was comforting him. One day, pointing to his wife, he said, "She is unwearied, loving kindness." When his young daughter, Faith, brought him a bunch of the flowers that he so much loved, he would say: "Fairer than the fairest flower; she was rightly named, was she not, doctor?" And of his younger child, Ernest, he more than once remarked to this beloved physician: "That boy will be all right when he knows his mother as I do."

As his ebbing life drew near its close, his thoughts hovered continually about his wife and children, and yet he was not solicitous about their future, for, said he on one occasion: "Susie was given me from the Lord, and as fast as He has seen it better for our babes to be 'transplanted to those everlasting gardens where angels walk and seraphs are the wardens,' He has done so; and we shall all be an unbroken family at last."

With these bright anticipations respecting them, he, after a few more days, vanished from before their weeping eyes to mingle in the "happy groups and sweet societies" of Heaven.

This was on the 28th of April, 1879. During the vernal days of the preceding year he had written from Lockport to his friend in the White Mountains: "I want to send you a message from here, indited by the tokens of spring. The robins and blue-birds are singing to me this morning with their blithe voices; the peculiar sapphire of the spring sky is glowing down upon me from between light, fleecy clouds, that seem like great birds of Paradise flying through the heavens to announce the advent of spring. . . . All this makes me think of you, and wonder how the lofty world in and around Bethlehem looks. If I were strong enough I would be tempted to start for the summits and witness the incoming of spring upon the mountains. I think there must be something glorious there in the victory of sunbeams over wild and tenacious winter. There must be splendor on the snow-peaks while valley and foot-hills begin to grow green."

When the vernal days had come again, bringing the tuneful birds and the sapphire sky, his spirit, being strong enough, fled as a bird to the mountains—the White Hills of God, where "everlasting spring abides."

After this brief contemplation of his life, we cannot wonder that the tidings of his departure, as they were flashed out in every direction, awakened in so many, many hearts, both at the East and West, a keen sense of personal bereavement.

As the remains were to be conveyed from Lockport to Milwaukee by way of Chicago, it was natural that arrangements should be made for memorial services in both the Union Park and Plymouth Churches. The spacious edifice of the former, in which the deceased had ministered so well during nine meridian years, was thronged with sorrowful friends, when, on the first of May, the funeral cortege arrived. As this people had a fresh remembrance of the cheerful, trustful, courageous life that had gone out, what could have been more appropriate than that purple violets should say, from a cross of roses and lilies on the pulpit, what his lips had there so often proclaimed, that "God is Love," and that white immortelles from behind it should silently declare, "He hath entered into rest"? After an invocation, a suitable selection from the Scriptures was read by the present pastor of the church, Dr. Noble, followed by brief addresses by Professor F. W. Fisk, Rev. C. H. Everest, and Dr. E. P Goodwin, in which worthy tributes were paid to Mr. Helmer's noble character and work. A tender prayer by Professor J. T. Hyde, and the benediction by Rev. E. S. Williams, closed the impressive services.

On the following day, at noon, similar services were held in Plymouth Church, Milwaukee, where Mr. Helmer's first pastoral work was done, and where his memory is still cherished by a host of friends. There, too, flowers, woven into various designs, symbolized the Christian graces that had adorned the character of the departed. An appropriate reading from the Word of God by Rev. G. T. Ladd, and a prayer by Dr. Healy, were followed by a memorial address, delivered by the present pastor of the church, Rev. H. T. Rose, which is worthy of the preservation that its printed form will give it.

In the beautiful Forest Home of Milwaukee the mortal garment of Mr. Helmer was laid away beside those of his translated babes. As we think of his earthly form lying there under the green sod and over-

arching boughs, we say that he is dead. Let us correct the expression, for *he* is not dead. He has ceased to speak to us; he has vanished from our sight:

"But strew his ashes to the wind,
Whose sword or voice has served mankind,—
And is he dead whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."

In this sense it is peculiarly true of Mr. Helmer that he still lives, for he carried his influence far down into the hearts of men, and there planted Christian *principles*, which are as growing trees that shall lift their branches higher and spread them wider with the years, and whose fruits are to ripen under coming suns.

"Oh, blessed is he whose life is nobly ended,
No dark dishonor shall his soul receive;
From peril flown, to God's pure light ascended,
A victor through the ages long to live—
Oh, blessed is he!
Gone to the city of unshaded splendor,
Gone from the toiling to the harvest field;
He gave the world the best that life could render,
And rests forever on his red-cross shield—
Oh, blessed is he!"

The shield leads me to speak of a great conflict of feeling through which Mr. Helmer passed just after his conversion, at the early age of sixteen. Up to that time it had been the great desire of his heart to go to a military school and graduate as a soldier. And now his new impulse toward the clerical profession was stoutly opposed by the strong current of his earlier inclination. For a full week of days and nights he could neither eat nor sleep for the conflict going on within him. At length the new impulse prevailed, and then all was peace once more, and evermore, for it was never ruffled again. He had relinquished his cherished purpose to obtain a military education, and yet he was to be a martial man in a nobler sense, and, on other battle-fields and with other weapons, do gallant service as a champion of his Divine Lord, for his nature was thoroughly chivalrous. Had he lived in feudal times he would have made a valiant knight, and would have tilted with a firm-set lance against wrongs of every kind, so keen

was his sense of justice, so great his love of mercy, and his devotion to the cause of the injured and distressed so unceasing. Into the arena of his sacred ministry he brought all these elements of a genuine knighthood, and fought a good fight with the best of weapons, for it can be said of him most emphatically, must be said in justice, and shall be said with admiration, that

> "His armor was his honest thought
> And simple truth his highest skill."

Here ends this imperfect biography of Mr. Helmer, the complete story of whose earthly life is written in the books of the Recording Angel, who is now penning its heavenly sequel, as our sainted brother continues to serve God, day and night, in the temple above.

"Feed the Flock of God which is among you . . . and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 Peter, v : 2, 4.

PROSE WRITINGS.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

WM. ALVIN BARTLETT.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD.

INTRODUCTION.

It is due to all concerned to say that this is a hasty and well-nigh indiscriminate selection of some specimen material out of the work of a busy life. The manuscripts have been in my hands less than a week. They are so rich and finished that one cannot go amiss. In his sermons and lectures and fugitive articles he put his serious thought. "The Ladder of Life," "One round for each day in the year," a series of devotional articles, is a partially finished undertaking. He had plain and ample notes for a book on "The Silent Years of Jesus." Another, "From the Supper to the Sepulchre," and a fiction, to be called "Our Place, or Life in the Loom." Also a treatise on "The Ministry of Physical Pain," which providence had so excruciatingly qualified him to write. The very ghosts of these books indicate his industry, his broad plans, the trend of his piety. The selected sermons are not exceptionally excellent, and the extracts could be multiplied without lowering the quality. From these, thrown off in the heat of his engrossing profession, we are to gather our estimate of the man. They reveal his sympathy with the heroic side of Christianity. They appeal not alone to duty and conscience, but to the fascination of exposure and service and victory. They reason. They flame with enforcing similies. Even the few specimens produced touch squarely or sidewise the vital evangelical truths: they are breezy, incisive, candid. Like all honest intellectual work, they reveal the man. You perceive the individuality of his mind and character.

There is sufficient originality consistent with the fact that it was the Bible he interpreted, and Christ he magnified. There is mental clearness and grasp—no flaccid hold of a theme, from text to application. The rhetoric is pure and entertaining—adapted to this modern people and age. There is boldness without rashness. No wild sentence slips its leash in the fervor of delivery. He never indulged the trick of exaggeration in doctrinal statement in one sermon to the grief of the church, for the purpose of counteracting its effect by an

equally overdrawn recantation in the next discourse. He was fair—guarded. He saw with intuitive sympathy the kernel of truth, and never mistook the burr for the nut. He preached Christ historic—spiritual. As a sentinel he challenged all comers, and yet he pierced so through the exterior and incidental that a benighted soldier who could not glibly give the pass-word from long exposure without, or defective memory, or indistinct articulation, might pass to the Lord's Host. Scrutinize his doctrinal positions, and you will admit that no enemy entered the camp through the loop of an unproportioned utterance.

While he appreciated the real infidelity of the day, he divined its strategic points. He never fought windmills from fright, nor in a theological nightmare mistook the Lilliputian for the Anakim. Here is fair, discriminating conflict.

He did not misread dispepsia for a low state of piety, nor a little physical ferver for vital godliness, nor a week's meetings for a revival.

There is great calmness, deliberation, maturity. His piety was an anthracite glow, steady, all day, not powder in any pyrotechnic variety, nor bonfire excitement, nor possibly a general illumination of enthusiasm. His heart, so tender, so true, brought its valley products up for the verdict of his intellect and conscience into cooler, clearer air amidst the white pinnacles.

While these contributions indicate that he communed with the van of the army of modern evangelical thought, he never grieved his Lord by a compromise or a betrayal. There is no vital salvation doctrine of Jesus he did not hold vitally. Doctrines which had been reserved for battle or curiosity he connected with present help and life. Christ was often accused by the purblind of breaking the law when he was only fulfilling it. Our friend was no iconoclast. He would not break the goddess which Praxiteles decoyed from the white marble. What if it be not a goddess! It is somewhat. The aureola of genius drapes it after twenty-two centuries. There is a place for the human. Science may jumble its good facts with bad philosophy and its specialists fail in attempting to test minds in the same crucible in which they test tree-fruit and sun-fruit, but still he thought Science is an Angel, though she has at times steped into Sodom. She may illustrate God's character and help us to know Him.

I find in this unburied part of my friend, by whose side I have thought and wrought in the exhilaration of the College class-room, in the more earnest outlook of the Theological Seminary, and on that roaring battle-field, Chicago, a man of essential sincerity and gifts and character. His fidelity, his purity, his intellectual clearness, in which his devout thought is held, as diamonds are said to enshrine tiny lakelets, his charity, his intolerance of sham and whine, his holy ambition to do Christ's work and in His spirit, his sunny cheerfulness—all of this sturdy Christian manhood removed—leaves a sad vacuum. The air has less oxygen. His last days of suffering, added to a life of happy effort, a lifting up to Calvary's fellowship.

Thus can infinite love make a transparency of this common sand so clear that through it you again see Christ with very little discoloration from the medium.

He went *on* at noon, not down. The sun does not set at midday. It may pass under eclipse. The body has become impersonal, not he. His mind, his character are in sight and active. Thought treads in dainty slippers, love in none at all. This nimbus glows and tells where he is and what. *We* are *sometimes* with the Lord, *He* is *ever*. We are so unlike our Lord that we cannot now see Him. He sees Him as he is, because he is like Him.

W. A. B.

SERMONS.

"Holding forth the word of life."

SERMONS.

THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER.

Whatever else may be denied to the Founder of Christianity, he is everywhere recognized as a great Teacher; those, even, who deny the Divine Son's equality with the Divine Father, accept Jesus as the Prince of Instructors. Whether he was God manifest in the flesh or not; he out-spake all the other speakers of the world, both by his wisdom and by his power. And yet he was not an orator, after the manner of Demosthenes, or any of the rest. He was trained in a Galilean carpenter shop, and not, like man-made declaimers, in the schools of rhetoric.

Notwithstanding, "never man spake like this man," said the officers whom the Pharisees and Priests had sent out to capture and silence Jesus. This was their apology for coming back without making the arrest. They were evidently captivated by the Divine eloquence of that wonderful Preacher, who had somehow got into his work without being ordained and installed by the Rabbis.

But this was not all. He was, moreover, a teacher of teachers. He founded the original school of Christian homiletics. And he picked up his pupils around the Lake of Galilee, simple and uninstructed rustics, too far from Jerusalem to know much; selecting, as we should say, the most unlikely material, for making the inaugural and representative preachers of a new religion. But in that school of the Great Teacher, fishermen were transformed, by Divine influence, into "fishers of men." And he who can catch men by the net of speech is an orator.

One autumn day, at Capernaum, our Lord had addressed a vast crowd gathered upon the shore of the lake, having a fishing boat for his pulpit. It was his great discourse of Parables—beginning with the parable of the Sower. And at evening, after dismissing the assembly, he went into the house again, with his disciples.

The multitude evidently did not understand his speech. For the disciples themselves failed to comprehend his meaning. Nevertheless, they had listened, attentively, through some strange fascination, or out of curiosity, or on account of the great reputation of the speaker, as a worker of miracles. But when they were alone again he explained to the disciples, at their request, the meaning of his figures. He took

pains to unlock for them the mysteries of his discourse ; for he was training them to go forth and preach in his stead ; and after satisfying himself that they comprehended his meaning, he gave them, in a single sentence, the germ of his system of teaching :

"Then said he unto them, therefore, every scribe, which is instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is a *householder*, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things *new* and *old*." *Matthew xiii* : 52.

This is the key to all true Christian preaching, and forms the basis of what I now have to say. Our Lord exemplified his own theory by his uniform practice. He was a Jew ; and so had in his treasury of knowledge the Mosaic system. He was also the Messiah, and therefore possessed the new doctrines of Christianity. And he was the Lord of Creation, without whom nothing in the universe had been made ; and thus, the natural world was among his treasures. Out of such a vast store-room he brought whatever he needed to do his work as a teacher of truth. And, as he sought to produce conviction and make converts, rather than elicit applause for his oratory, he spoke straight down to the average understanding. Never were there such themes as he handled for the first time in human speech ; so high, so abstruse, so immeasurably rich in significance. A merely human speaker would hardly have resisted the temptation to display himself. But Jesus was a fisher of men, teaching his friends that divine art of fishing in the same waters. And so he made his net and drew it accordingly. What he wanted to catch was human minds, not echoes. Now men and women, for the most part, live in common things ; they think of common things ; they are interested in common things. The majority of people everywhere care more about a loaf of bread or a yard of cloth than they do about the morning star, or the science of astronomy. When you travel in Central Africa or among the Pacific Islands, you expect to buy of the natives ivory and coral, by a string of glass beads. For you say, "These people comprehend beads ; trinkets interest them ; a piece of glass measures their mental stature ; and they can understand beads better than steam-engines or libraries." And, *relatively*, the mass of mankind are still in the era of glass *beads*. They were so in Galilee when Jesus began to open the mysteries of the true religion. His neighbors lived in the country, where men sowed their seed and reaped their harvests ; on the shore of the lake, where they caught their daily fish ; walked through the fields, where the flowers grew. These were elements in their every day life. The people were more interested in these things than in the civil tumults that filled the streets of Rome with their racket. To have good crops and a fine family of children—that was more important, in their view at least, than to have Tiberius or somebody else for Emperor. Now, observe the method of Christ's teaching, and its close correspondence to these facts. Sheep-folds, wheat-fields, flowers, the lake, children, freshets, vineyards, dinners, business, amusement ; these were the familiar vehicles of

speech, which were made to carry the sublimest truths ever presented to the mind of man. Galilee, and not Greece or Rome, shaped the discourses of Jesus. He employed the peripatetic style of teaching; and there is none of the musty smell of libraries in what he says; but his words are full of the sweetness and freshness of out-door life. I do not suppose he ever owned a book in his life. He was no scribe or lawyer. And while the learned Rabbis were astonishing the common people by their vast erudition, fighting over a line or a dot in their old manuscripts, this new teacher out of Galilee was putting into human speech, by the most familiar illustrations, the great truths of the gospel, by which human society was to be reconstructed, and the human race brought to salvation. Himself the perfect Master of Discourse, he wished to train the men whom he had selected for Apostles, that they too might preach his gospel, after his ministry had ended. And so he said to them: "You are scribes in the Kingdom of Heaven, to be instructed in these mysteries of my doctrines; and as such you are like a householder, to bring forth upon occasion, as circumstances shall require, things new and old."

Here is the owner of a mansion, which is full of all manner of treasures. He throws open the door and invites you to come in and see what he has. He takes you from the bottom to the top of his house, and every bolt in all the chambers and closets and hidden rooms, flies back at his approach. He shows you his abundance in the store-room of the kitchen; all the comforts and apparatus of his dining-room; takes you into his parlor, where the walls are hung with choice paintings by many masters from different lands—where in the corner and niche stand the works of the best sculptors; displays his port-folio of engravings and photographs; calls your attention to the elegant furniture; leads you into the library and points to the high-piled marvels of genius in letters; opens his cabinet of antiquities, showing you the things that were once in Egypt and on the banks of the Euphrates, and of the Tiber, and piles of coins from ancient mints; calls your attention, here to an heir-loom, there to the latest style of silver ware; and so, from room to room conducting you, the proprietor exposes to your view all the various treasures of his house, the accumulations of years of patient effort. That householder is the "scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven"; and that scribe is the christian preacher. So said the Divine Teacher to his pupils at Capernaum.

But let us carry this truth a little further into detail. What is the Christian preacher's treasury? What does it contain? I. The answer to this question will be sufficiently definite, perhaps, if I say first, that it consists of what may be called his *material*. The preacher is not a creator, in the absolute sense, any more than the poet or the painter. He is a constructor. And there is abundant room for genius and originality in what he is called to produce. But his

material exists, and it is ready for him; just as the clay is ready for the potter, when he puts his foot to his wheel.

This material is the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Christian preacher is not called to create a gospel, he finds it in the Bible. The Inspired Book is his mine. And he has just as good a title to that mine as the Pope or the Council. He is not bound to sit down demurely and lazily at the mouth of the mine or take the ingots of dogmas, as they are brought out to him, from the hands of the exegetical diggers and washers and moulders. He need not despise nor refuse their work, to be sure; and will not if he is wise. But at the same time he will be foolish if he does not dig for himself.

The Bible is a book of germinal truths. Its doctrines are presented to the reader in the seed-form. I do not know whether in the beginning God created an acorn, and caused an oak tree to grow from that; or whether he created the tree first and grew an acorn upon its boughs. But, ever since, his method in vegetation has been to plant seeds. And the analogy holds in the realm of moral truth, so far as he has taught the world through human language. The Bible is a book of seed-truths. They are to be implanted in the human mind. The very first sentence of Scripture is of this sort: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That is a seed, from which grows the immense tree of cosmology, with its branches of astronomy, geography, geology, and all the rest. As Martin Luther once said: "If a man lived a thousand years, he would not learn those words through and through." And the last sentence of the sacred volume is of the same nature: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all"—the benediction germ of all the preaching; budding, leafing, blossoming and fruit-bearing life of all future Christian generations. And this was a very marked characteristic of our Lord's teaching. He spoke commands in parables and metaphors; never in the syllogisms of logic or the formulas of mathematics. By a single word or phrase he dug wells in human speech down to the living waters of eternal truth; from which the millions of the best nations on earth have been drinking for two thousand years; and the fountain is just as fresh and full and inexhaustible to-day as when first opened in Galilee. Some of it, indeed, has been drawn off by men into carefully constructed statements, into cisterns of creeds; and if any one thinks that the water in these tastes a little insipid sometimes, let him know that it is cool and sweet as ever down in the wells. Water does not improve by standing in cisterns and pails; and it is the preacher's business to go to the wells, and to take his hearers there with him.

This germinal mode of teaching, which characterizes the Bible, was necessary from the very nature of the case. Not otherwise could the essential truths of the Gospel have been communicated to man. They would have been too bulky. The seeds of a vegetation that

shall cover a continent may be brought across the sea in a single ship; but not the vegetation itself. I can carry an oak-grove in my pocket, in the acorn-form. So of the Bible. It is a small book; easily read through, if you read by the page or the chapter. But it is the mother of libraries; the germ of literatures; the seed of theologies; and is yet to fill the world with the luxuriant growths of its sublime and vital truths. But there is another reason for the assumption of this form, viz.: that it is the only form which secures inexhaustibleness. A Bible of the genuine religion must have no bottom. The majority of books which men write empty themselves in a short time; even those, I mean, which are not already empty before they can be brought into the publisher's stalls. A book that will endure a second perusal is a treasure; put that into your library, and refuse to lend it. But the Bible is inexhaustible—indeed, the only inexhaustible book there is in the hands of men. The works of Plato, Aristotle and Confucius are deep; but it is possible to touch bottom in them.

Now, this fact of the inexhaustibleness of the preacher's material must be to him a great comfort and infinitely suggestive. It is not pleasant for him to live in the apprehension of running out some day, and so having nothing more to say; of becoming *dry* in a worse sense, perhaps, even, than being dull. He knows very well, if he knows anything, that his own resources of knowledge are limited. His mind is only a cistern, that must have a pipe connecting it with the fountains of truth in the everlasting hills of Divine Revelation. And not only so; but the preacher will be apt, some day, to catch the hint, especially if he is studious and thoughtful, that there is more in the gospel of Christ than he will ever be able to bring out. The idea will occur to him that all the systems of belief which men have constructed out of this material have not exhausted it. He will discover that theology is not a synonyme for Bible. There are people, not a great many, perhaps, but some, who assume and assert that there is such a thing as a perfect and complete system of theology. What they affirm is that they have found the cosmos of religious truth; have obtained its dimensions and order; and are able to construct it in human language.

Theology, of course, is an intellectual necessity. And no doubt it is possible to make up a system, But the question is, if we are to speak definitely (and one ought to be definite in a science) whether any such system ever yet made embraced all the truths of the Christian religion and in all their various forms and aspects. There is no theological cosmos without fulfilling this condition. And that the condition has never been fulfilled would appear evident from the fact that every such system that has been put forth has found an opposing system, which claimed to have issued from the same source and composed from the same material.

Truth is many-sided; and he who sees only one side may say that

he has seen it, and be honest in the belief that he has. But his neighbor who has walked around the pyramid and looked at the other sides knows better. Theology should be the science of the Divine—or, if you please to say so, the science of God. And yet one of the first assertions of theology is that God is incomprehensible. Here you have, then, an incomprehensible element in a comprehended system. The main fact of all theology is inexplicable; and yet it is a perfect and complete system, according to the claim of some. Listen to the words of one whom a learned Christian historian pronounces one of the greatest men of modern times: "Again and again have I said that I knew not what to do with a metaphysical God; and that I will have no other but the God of the Bible, who is *heart* to *heart*. Whoever can reconcile the metaphysical God with the God of the Bible may try it, and write symbolical books to suit all ages; but he who admits the absolute inexplicability of the main point, which can only be approached by asymptotes, will never grieve at the impossibility of forming any *system* of religion."

All the use I wish just now to make of this is to say that the preacher, in studying his material, will consider himself let loose into the liberty of this inexhaustibleness of Divine Revelation. He is not fenced in by human boundaries, nor tethered within a certain circle of mental grazing by the rope of a fixed and unalterable system; he will allow himself range of thought, and broad latitudes of investigation; he will accept the divine commission to think freely and for himself. In respect to this, now, there are, in our time, two opposite tendencies; and, as a tendency is apt to beget a party—two parties. They are both parties of progress in a certain sense; but one is progress to the front, and the other "progress to the rear." The one accepts the existing formulas of doctrine, as the complete and final statements, in scientific form, of the truths of the gospel of Christ. The constructive work of the theologian is finished. At the end of the nineteenth century the householder has nothing new left. Henceforth he is permitted to bring out of his treasury the old and these alone. The future must feed, from this time, on antiquities. And blessed are they in the coming ages who have a relish for dust and prefer mummies to men.

And on the other side are those who, resting confidently in the Bible as the sufficient disclosure of God's will in language form, still believe that the theologians have not yet completed their work. They accept the fact that there is a progress of doctrine in the Bible; and that there has been a progressive unfolding of gospel truth through all the Christian ages. They believe Christ Himself to be the sum and substance of Christian theology; and that the sanctified human intellect, coöperating with the regenerated heart, will never—as it never can—exhaust this theme, or so fully comprehend it, as to fix forever and unalterably, in words, the perfect knowledge of it. They

approve what Schleiermacher so well says, "that all our progress in Divine knowledge must consist solely in more correctly understanding and more completely appropriating to ourselves that which is in Christ." On this theory there is life, there is growth, there is progress, every age may think for itself, and may speak and write what it thinks; so may every man and woman.

Nor does this put Christendom on a sand bed instead of a rock; I take it that the Bible is just as solid a rock as the Apostles' creed or the Athanasian, or any other. A house built of granite is no more granitic than the everlasting hills from which the stone was taken; and it probably will not endure any longer, however fine and elaborate the architecture. I bring no accusation against architecture. But if another Michel Angelo should be born in 1969, let not the old world be frightened out of its wits by his advent.

And however we may stand toward these parties, whatever we may happen to think of them, everybody perceives the wide-spread indifference to mere doctrines. Some regard it as a sign of degeneracy of the times. Perhaps it is, but it is worth observing that no advance was ever made in the world without some people calling it degeneracy. When inventive genius turned out the horses and harnessed steam, there were men who thought it a sign so bad that the world must be on the very brink of ruin. The Pope and his friends considered Luther a moral earthquake, strewing Europe with the ruins of truth and religion. There are Protestants who ought to go and help rebuild the middle ages.

Now, the living Preacher cannot ignore these facts, whatever they may do who burrow in libraries. Books are good; but real life is equally good, if not better, for the pulpit teacher; and that sermon is the best which produces the best results, whether it is composed in the style of Jonathan Edwards, or of George Whitefield, or somebody else. But the endeavor to compel people in these days to listen to discourses that were honey in the comb fifty years ago, is an insanity of conservatism. We may like it, or not like it; it may be good, or it may be bad; nevertheless, the wise scribe in the pulpit will recognize the fact. And when people say to him, as now and then some of them will, "It looks as though you would be obliged to re-state some of your doctrines to meet the new exigencies of progress," he will not angrily respond, "Impossible! there is no warrant for it in the books; the very suggestion is monstrous, dangerous!" And when some good man, at least good as any in all other respects, ventures for himself to reconsider the grounds of his belief, and having given patient thought and prayerful study to the work, exercises the right to speak and print what he thinks, the wise scribe will not put his fingers in his ears and rush upon the innovator, to destroy him as an enemy of God and man.

There may be such scribes; doubtless there are some; but

whether they are wise is quite another question. There are those who adopt the *crushing* system; anything new in the realm of theological thinking must be *crushed* out; any deviation from the ancient fathers is to be *crushed*. Fresh thought on the subject of religion is so dangerous a thing, that some authoritative heel must be put upon it and *crush* it; and all this hard, barbarous, inquisitorial crushing is to be done in the name of Him, of whom it was said: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Well, there is one comfort in all this, from the fact that the spirit of the age, as well as the spirit of Christ, is against it, and that the crushers of heresy are dying out as a race, and are giving place to a fearless investigation and candid debate. Let Galileo get up from his knees and defend his astronomy.

But let us now pass from the material itself to the *practical handling* of it. The pulpit scribe, under the figure of a householder, has an inexhaustible treasury; how shall he bring out his treasures? The characteristic of the method, as given by our Lord under this analogy, is expressed by the phrase, "things new and old." The new and the old together are as comprehensive as anything can be. They embrace the universe; every door opens at that signal. In the whole range of human knowledge, the inaccessible is the only limit.

What the truth wants is proper vehicles, and the preacher is authorized to take these wherever he can find them; vindicating his course in the same way as did the disciples whom Jesus sent to bring the colt for His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, with the reply, "The *Lord hath need* of them." Jesus himself pursued this method; it was not the style of the Rabbis, but was better; and by His example He pointed out the way for all Christian teachers in all ages. The truths of the Gospel must be put into the human mind in some way, and it will not do for the teacher to say "the truths are good and wholesome; they are even vital and essential; and men may take their choice, to hear or forbear." . . . . . .

Preaching, in its real import, is not turning a crank, mechanically, to play a set tune. The Gospel in the Bible is a grand organ, with multitudinous pipes and stops, whose combinations and multiplying capacities make it an instrument of utterance for all the utterable mysteries of sound; the marvelous medley of human life on the earth, through the whole circuit of man's experience; the thunders of Sinai; the tearful pathos of Calvary; the wailings of the lost in dark perdition; and the vast oceanic choral outburst of the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands upon the heavenly Mount Zion, singing the songs of the redeemed. But this glorious instrument requires a player. Put ignorance at the keys, and the organ knows nothing. Let a fool draw the stops, and the organ is a fool. But give it a master of music, and immediately it

understands all melodies, and sweeps through the highest heavens of harmony. The preacher of the gospel, therefore, is bound to consider his auditory and his occasions. He cannot speak from the serene heights of indifference to his times, assuring himself that it must be all right because the same things were said by the Apostolic fathers, and repeated afterwards in New England.

Every age has its own peculiar traits, generations have spirits—possess temperaments. Time is individualized in periods. And the scribe of the kingdom of heaven must be a man for the times. In the earliest Christian era the gospel went forth to meet Judaism on the one hand and Paganism on the other. These facts determined the style of preaching for the period. Peter preaching to the Jews at Jerusalem, and Paul to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, discoursed very differently. Why was not one general epistle sufficient for all the wants of the Apostolic churches? Why must Paul write one to the Romans, another to the Corinthians, a third to the Hebrews, a fourth to the Thessalonians; and so on through the whole list? Simply, because he had a practical object in view in each case, and had a gospel for exigencies. Still later the gospel came in contact with the barbarism of Northern Europe, and adapted itself to that. Then Christianity, forgetting itself, formed a misalliance with the civil state, and the Papacy moulded the preaching. Again it reacted toward its true independence, and Protestantism shaped the discourse. And under these general divisions are manifold subdivisions, whose outlines are sufficiently distinct to attract the attention of the student of ecclesiastical history. But everywhere and through it all you will find that the successful preacher was in sympathy with his age, and with the most advanced sentiments of his age. John Knox, of whom an English ambassador said that his vehement manner "put more life into him than six hundred trumpets," was a man for the times. His discourses were not Quaker guns, with a pile of wooden balls for peroration. They were not sermons which might be put into the hands of a bookseller, to be purchased by some ease-loving minister, to be preached by him, with equal adaptation and effect, in Edinburgh or London, New York or Chicago. Such sermons, to be sure, have their conveniences, but hardly meet the requirements of the well-instructed scribe.

In our age the gospel comes upon what may be called cosmopolitanism. Formerly there were neighborhood fences and national boundaries, and such things still exist on the maps. But the man of this century is a citizen of the world. His home is the planet; and he does business where he can make the most money, whether that be in America, Europe, Asia or Africa. The race is growing nomadic. He who has not in him the spirit of travel is a fossil. His generation has gone, leaving him a last year's leaf. The nations are in a universal whirl and flux. Steam is transporting them from continent to

continent. The Chinese wall is obsolete; and the Celestial Empire, finding its mouth after ages of seclusion, empties into the great Republic.

Now, while there are evils connected with this trait of the age, and growing out of it, it has also advantages; but, more than all, it is a fact—and must be recognized as such.

This cosmopolitanism has breadth, and insures liberty. It is fatal to bigotry. The free circulation of the winds carries off malaria.

People who travel see a great deal and learn the art of comparing. They are not so easily imposed upon; that which was large enough for them when they left home, is too small, now, when they return, having gone round the globe. The Colossus cannot endure comparisons. The preacher of to-day, you perceive, does not stand upon the outside of these things looking upon them as a stranger; he is in the midst. And it is a vital question for him to whom the gospel is committed, whether for this newness of the age he has anything new to bring out of his householder's treasury. Is he doomed to stand muttering antiquities alone, while the world is talking novelties? Or will it do for him to be discussing the stupendous trifles of priestly robes, rites, postures, tones, etc., while the world is building continental railways and laying submarine telegraph cables? Or will he bring on an attack of bronchitis by trying to make the people listen to his demonstrations of the "Five Points of Calvin," while they are eagerly crowding in another direction toward "Ecce Homo" and "Ecce Deus?" Would it not be as well for him to begin where the age requires him to begin—with the question, "What think ye of Christ," and then include as many points of Calvin, Augustine or Edwards, or any other good theologian as he can render useful in saving souls, and at the same time keep his throat sound? He who fights prejudices fights a fire; but he who fights the spirit of his age fights a fog. And a fire may possibly be extinguished; but a fog never.

If, therefore, the people of this age will not listen to doctrinal preaching in the style of fifty years ago, why not change the style? This matter of taste, after all, may be something beyond the volition of the age. If the age is practical instead of metaphysical, whose fault is it?

And those people who have made up their minds exactly, as to the size and shape of the shoe which this generation ought to wear, whether it wishes to or not, and are trying to force it on, are doing a superfluous work. The Chinese alone, so far as I know, make the foot to fit the shoe, and that is done to prevent walking. Suppose it a thing demonstrated, even if it is not, that the tendency of the times is to a point beyond true liberty; that liberality means mere looseness of opinion; and that what goes under the name of antagonism

to bigotry is nothing but hatred of truth. What is the best way of dealing with the fact? On the one side are those who fling themselves to the opposite extreme and take an attitude of hostile defiance. What they design and counsel is open war; and of course all channels of communication are closed, and all lines of sympathy are cut. On the other side are those who launch upon the popular current, drop their oars, and, of course, are soon swept away by the stream. Instead of reforming, they have themselves become conformed. But the true method lies between these. It is neither to draw the sword and fling away the scabbard, nor to capitulate without terms. It is rather to avail oneself of every means and opportunity to advance the truth in such ways as are opened. He who is wise will get as close as possible to his generation, in order to do men good in every possible manner, instead of standing aloof from them to shoot from afar arms of denunciation and rebuke.

Reformations are to be achieved from *within*, in institutions and churches. Stay on board and *steer* the vessel. Retain the *reins* and *guide* the horses you cannot stop. If the tendency of the age is toward rationalism, can we not say frankly, "Christianity invited the attention of reason?" Is reason a monster that is going to swallow us all, unless our legs can take us out of its reach? If it is a time of irreverent criticism and fearless research, even into the foundations of our faiths, will not the Christian religion bear the most thorough investigation? If not, there can be no better time to find it out. Are there some who are saying "we are drifting into mere naturalism, with the religion of nature?" Is it not legitimate for us to reply candidly with the question, "Is nature of the Devil or of God?" Did not the same God who redeemed our race create the world? Are not the stars and the rocks, the floral and animal kingdoms, the records of His thoughts? When Jesus came to Galilee did He not come to His own fields, as well as to His own people? And were not our good fathers somewhat too fearful lest one of Christ's own lilies should get into their sermons and disturb the doctrinal argument? What if our modern pulpit discourses do smell a little more of the fields, and a little less of the library; is that necessarily bad?

If the enemy of all truth varies, from time to time, his mode of attack upon the foundations of religion, the pulpit scribe must bring forth from his store-room something new to meet the emergency; the treasures are certainly there. If Dr. Paley's celebrated argument from design does not exactly meet all the objections raised in these new days, is it necessary for the preacher to persist in using a watch to prove a designer?

There is no objection to steam engines, or printing presses, or even velocipedes, that I know of; and if the modern Sadducee says, that what we have been calling the human mind is only phosphorus,

why the preacher must study physiology and chemistry, instead of replying very solemnly, "Mr. Sadducee, you teach a melancholy Atheism, and if you could only read the Bible in Hebrew and Greek you would see your error." Hebrew and Greek are good; they are the old; and physiology and chemistry are good; they are the new. And every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven will bring out of his treasury "things *new* and *old*."

It is just as true now as it ever has been that the welfare of the church depends very much upon the *character* of the men who occupy the pulpit. I use the word character purposely, as something distinct from the mental culture. Our theological seminaries are instituted to train men for the ministry. Their work begins, continues and ends in training. But they must work upon material. That material is the individual constitution, including the natural gifts and temperament. And what I say is, that the welfare of the church depends largely on these native constitutions that are put upon this training for the ministry; for the quality of the preacher comes from his constitution, not from his training. There are good preachers who never saw a theological seminary, and there are poor ones who have had all the advantages of a three years' course. The scribe must be not only instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, but he must be constitutionally a scribe. Buffon, I think it is, who says, "Style is the man." And while the material, which the preacher is to employ, is the fundamental idea of his work, his style of using it is no slight matter. Take two men equally pious, equally in earnest, equally learned in the lore of the gospel, and one may so present the truth that it shall go straight to the minds and hearts of his hearers, while the other will be pouring water on rocks. One succeeds in his ministry, and the other does not. It is simply a question of handling his material. There are preachers who seem to consider the gospel of salvation merely a literary reservoir, out of which fine theological or sentimental essays are to be drawn. Whether the essay will be theological or sentimental depends upon the temperament. There are others who find the Bible a book of great mysteries and profound problems, and who give themselves to metaphysical dissertations. They may be quite valuable as dissertations and as narcotics. There are others still whose grand aim is to be sound in doctrine, according to the standards. It is not with them so much a question whether the truth is nutritious and life-giving, as whether it is altogether safe. Theirs is a gospel of orthodoxy. And closely allied with this class are those who issue from the pulpit a torrent of pious exhortation, a stream of goodish talk, that empties with dreary murmurs into a shallow sea of religious platitudes.

Meanwhile the ways of Zion languish. Steam hurls the world onward. Science opens the depths and explores the subterranean. Trade impresses all nature into its service. Literature buds and

blossoms with new beauties. Art creates its wonders. Society is agitated from centre to circumference by new questions. New exigencies in civilization arise. And still the lotus-eaters of the pulpit dream.

But from the now desolate Capernaum comes sounding down to us the voice of the great Teacher, saying, "Bring out from your treasury things *new* and *old*."

The one word which expresses that idea is the word *practical*, and one of the most encouraging signs of the times is the practical tendency, everywhere, almost, discernible in the pulpit. There is a disposition and determination to deal with living issues, not with dead questions and buried difficulties. You may say the grand aim and end of the pulpit is the conversion of sinners and the edifying of saints. So it is. But the sinners to be converted and the saints to be edified are those who are perpetrating their sins and trying to be saints, not in Jerusalem, or Rome or Pekin, but here in this city, of which Dr. Guthrie's Sunday Magazine speaks, as "desperately ungodly, far removed, to all human appearance, from all religious susceptibilities." If this is the moral character of our locality, then, surely, sentimental essays on religion written with rose-wreathed pens, are as heartless and cruel as Nero's fiddling while Rome was burning. Perhaps, however, it is not quite so desperate a case now, since the Sunday Magazine has heard of a revival here lately. But still genuine practical preaching is not universal by any means. Mr. Froude, the English historian, recently said, in an address at the University of St. Andrews, that "of the many hundreds of sermons he had heard in England, he had never heard one on common honesty." Either Mr. Froude was unfortunate in his opportunities, or there is no need of preaching on honesty in England, or else the British pulpit has neglected its duty. Perhaps the historian would have fared better in America. At any rate, there is need enough here of preaching on common honesty. And he who will preach a gospel practically applied to the wants of the age and locality, preach it boldly, with a progressive, liberal, independent spirit, will find that this old tree of Christianity with two thousand years in its roots and sturdy trunk and wide overshadowing branches, has just as much sap in it now as ever. It is a tree planted by the rivers of water; its leaves are for the healing of the nations, not for making garlands to crown the successful competitor in rhetoric and logic and theology. Such has been the experience in all periods of the Church.

Look at that great Franciscan preacher of the latter half of the thirteenth century—Berthold, who extended his pulpit triumphs all the way from Bavaria to Thuringia and far into Switzerland. He went preaching from city to city; churches could not contain the multitudes that flocked to hear him. His friends erected for him temporary pulpits in the fields, where he sometimes preached to sixty

thousand people. His gospel recognized the sins of his time, which he freely and boldly rebuked; all ranks and classes came under the sweep of his truth. Nor was it a barren declaration or a fruitless oratory, the harvest ripened at once. . . . . .

That is what I should call good preaching; and why not something like this in the latter half of the nineteenth century? Is the scribe's treasury exhausted, so that people stay away from sermons? Does he come empty-handed because there is nothing new for him to bring? No one will say this, and yet the complaints continue that the masses prefer concerts and lectures to sermons. Is the whole source of the difficulty to be found in "total depravity?" No doubt if we had more of God's spirit in our hearts the aspect of the case would be changed. But is there not something due to the instrumentalities? People buy and read sermons, whether they go to hear them or not; every week the discourses of Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Beecher are scattered abroad wherever people read the English tongue. And do not both of these eminent preachers exemplify the well-instructed scribe of the kingdom of Heaven, as presented by our Lord? You may berate their heresy or applaud their orthodoxy, it makes no difference; you may criticise their styles according to the rules of homiletics, it makes no difference, they preach right on, and the Lord stands by them; you may shake your head ominously and say, "It looks well enough on the surface, but the final results will be deplorable." I think they will be deplorable to those who are looking back toward the Middle Ages to see the dawn of millennium, but to those who believe in a practical pulpit—in a pulpit that is in sympathy with the times, in a pulpit that is progressive, independent, and thoughtful, having in its treasury "things new and old," there will be little to deplore and much, very much, for rejoicing.

THE DIVINE FORCE.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. *Zachariah iv*: 6.

This is Jehovah's message to Zerubbabel, the Hebrew prince. The Jews had returned from Babylon, and were preparing to rebuild the temple. As the prince stood amid the ruins of the great city, temple and palace destroyed, a desolation upon which the storms of seventy dreary years had poured their grief and rage, the prospect seemed dark and dismal enough. The power of the nation was broken. Their wealth was exhausted. They had been humiliated and stripped of all their resources. But they had come back to the old spot; and there, amid the debris of Jerusalem's former glory, they were to perform the work of restoration. Just at that point came this word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel. And the prophet who brought it had seen a vision of a golden candlestick, whose light was furnished by an inexhaustible supply of oil from two living olive trees. The message was an interpretation of the vision.

This immense task of rebuilding Jerusalem, was not accomplished by mere human agencies and energies. To be sure, there must be masons and carpenters and laborers; there must be money and material, as in all building of cities; but the essential element of success was back of all that. We know something ourselves about rebuilding cities in these days. And in our estimation of the probabilities of success, we reckon the spirit of the people; their courage, faith, hopefulness, resolution, unconquerable energy. Without these, Chicago would have slumbered in her ashes.

The principle expressed in the text is somewhat analogous to this; only it was not the comparatively impotent spirit of humanity, but the infinitely potent spirit of God, that was the basis of confidence and hope.

I perceive in this, my friends, a general truth, of which I now wish to speak.

The Spirit of God is the supreme force of the universe. There is no debate about the fact of the Divine Omnipotence. If there is a God, He must be all-powerful. Ordinarily men speak of Him as the Almighty. But what ideas have we of might and power? A giant is mighty, a horse is powerful. An army, a whirlwind, a steam-engine, are mighty agencies. So that our first conceptions of might and power are from external things, from physical nature. The primitive idea of strength is muscular. And our theology follows the same

order. The lowest conception of Divine power is, that He can toss the ponderous world through space, or hurl the storms and material energies of the globe.

But we have reached a point in the world's progress, when the human mind is looking deeper into physical mysteries. The prime topic of study in the material sphere now is *force*, or the forces. And these are understood to be immaterial. Heat, light and electricity, that were once called imponderable matter, are now considered spiritual forces. Scientific men are talking of modes and forms of energy. No force is ever annihilated; it is simply converted into some other. All of which, to one who heartily believes in God, leads legitimately on to the conclusion that the Divine spirit is the ultimate one of the universe. And as there is no such thing as abstract power, the source and terminus of all these forces must be an infinite personal spirit.

It is worth while to remember these things, because there exists in our day a decided tendency, in many minds, to exclude God from an active participation in material affairs. Even in the important matter of prayer, Professor Tyndall and his friend seem to aim at confining it to the spiritual sphere. It will not do to pray for rain or health or wealth, but one may ask God, perhaps, to forgive his sins and inspire him with good disposition. This is important, because hitherto we have been thinking that God could also help us in externals.

In the history of the world's growth there has been going on a constant change from the grosser forms of power to those less palpable to sense. There has been a process of transition from the muscular to the mechanical. A thousand things that were once done by horses and the muscles of the human body are now performed by steam.

In the earlier times, men fought hand to hand, foot to foot, and eye to eye, with war-clubs, battle-axes, swords and spears. But now they stand at respectful distances, and by the explosion of a convenient chemical compound, shoot bullets into each other. In those rude ages they constructed their clumsy battering rams, whose ponderous timbers, swung by muscular strength, were made to thunder against the walls of besieged cities. But now the artillery, posted miles away, flings its balls and bombs at the simple touch of fire, crashing and exploding with terrific destructiveness. Merchandise was once transported on the backs of men and beasts of burden over slow, weary miles that are now traversed by the swift wheels of the locomotive, bearing the commerce of nations. Steam has taken the place of animal strength. Messengers used to run with tidings on their tongues, as the speediest communication; then horses, which were swifter and stronger, took the place of men, and carrier doves superseded these, as the swiftest of all carriers. But now the electric

force repeats through all latitudes and longitudes the daily news of the world. Thus material muscle has given way to immaterial force.

Man himself, at first, is mainly an intelligent animal, with the physical powers dominant. The tallest and most muscular man is king; because he is the best fighter in the clan. Then comes the era of intellect. Brain force, thought power, intelligence, genius, come into supremacy. Later still, in the process of development, moral qualities begin to take a more prominent position and secure popular reverence. I do not say that the world has yet reached the point where the moral nature rules; but toward that point it tends. And last of all arrives that which is spiritual. As a spiritual being, man is still in his infancy, and but feebly appreciated. But the time is coming when upon his brow will be placed the crowns of the world.

The same is true of governments. First comes the government by physical force. Might is the basis of right. The weak man has no rights which the strong is bound to respect. One nation overruns another by sheer physical energy, and having done this, considers itself entitled to all the plunder. It is nothing but robbery on the highway of nationalities.

And even at this late day, the best armies determine dominion. In Europe, nominally Christian, the big powers swallow the little ones, as the whale clears his part of the sea. But by and by, right begins to assert itself against might. Justice becomes able to fling the bloody sword back into its scabbard. Rifled cannon are no longer allowed to dictate everything. What is it that disallows? Something higher, nobler, better; something spiritual, that interposes a new form of energy. Liberty, for example, reaches its birth, and becomes a power among the old powers. And the better-minded world will not suffer it to be strangled by the fingers that happen to have the most muscular grip. It is clearly entitled to existence. It is a beautiful dawn, transfiguring the Eastern horizon of humanity; and men, who have been worshipping lions and elephants, because of their physical strength, begin to discover divinity in sunbeams.

If the avalanche crushes and bruises under its foot the Alpine violet, men begin sympathetically to love the violet and hate the avalanche. They say bravely, "Ponderous powers, like this, have no right irresponsibly to crush life and beauty." In this way Nimrod, by and by, loses his scepter, and Solomon takes it. Thus wisdom and peace become powers in the world; and the spirit of man supersedes his body in the dynasties of life.

It is not to be expected, therefore, that mankind are going to see God's ultimate idea at the very outset. They must advance to it, with a vision gradually clarified. At first, to their conceptions, He Himself is Almighty, afterwards All-wise, still later All-good, and last of all a loving Spirit, paternal in His relations to mankind. So that

precisely what you might expect, you see in the history of Providence. He brings a corrupt world to its senses, morally, by flinging a deluge across its continents. The power and the devastation are appalling. And it is carried wholesomely for a while in the human memory.

When the king of Egypt persists in his oppressions, the Almighty causes him to loosen his grip upon his slaves by a series of terrible plagues. He marches before His liberated people; plows a broad furrow of escape for them through the sea. On Sinai, where the national constitution must be written, He abounds with physical demonstrations; His power thunders and blazes and shouts. Even Jesus himself recognizes this law. And so, He begins by transforming water into wine. He quells a turbulent storm on the lake; opens blind eyes; sets the blood circulating vigorously in a paralyzed arm; amazes His countrymen by plucking a dead and buried friend out of the very jaws of death. And when He himself, at length, yields to the fatal dominance of physical power, and lies down in the sepulchre, the Divine Force is still there, to rock Jerusalem with an earthquake, and tear the old vail of the temple from top to bottom. And yet, all this is done, this physical demonstration is made, at the very time when God is inaugurating a new era on earth; when He is setting forth before men the truest conceptions of manhood and life.

Nor does it end here. The echoes of this material tumult roll on down into the new era of the spirit. On the day of Pentecost there are sounds of whirlwinds and flashes of flame. The new power coming down into men makes some of the old noise and display, because the world is yet asleep in its senses. Even Paul himself, an extremely intelligent man, must hear a voice out of the upper air, and have a sun-burst dashed into his eyes, to set him firmly in the orbit of his apostleship.

Prior to much of this history, God had said—"'Not by might or by power, but by my *spirit*,' saith the Lord of Hosts." He was the God of armies, but His plan was not to establish the kingdom of heaven by armies. He could wield all the mighty agencies of nature; but this was not His idea. There is something better and higher than all this. Our Lord Himself set forth distinctly this great truth of the spirit. He went into heaven bodily, that He might return a spirit, losing thus none of His Divine power, but rather liberating infinite latent energies. Nevertheless, His followers—the Christian world—have gone on, for the most part, to build up the kingdom of heaven in a very physical kind of way. Like Peter, they have wanted to be saved; they have kindled the fagots; have turned the torturing wheel in defense of the *truth*, which, all the while, was sweating great drops of blood in an agony of sorrow over such false methods. They have made hierarchies with gradations of priestly office and function; have allied the Church with the civil powers, substituting the sword of politics for the sword of the spirit. They have chained the Bible in

solitary confinement; have built a fortress for faith out of formulated doctrines. I do not deny that they have meant, and do now mean, all the while, more or less sincerely, to carry forward the work of God among men. But these methods are mistakes; they stand before the world demonstrated failures. They are not the Divine method. They are the wrecks of attempts made to convert the race by might and power, and the race, to-day, is not converted.

But how is it with us? What is the state of this case, in the latter part of the nineteenth century? How are we managing the Lord's business? By what methods are we trying to rebuild the Jerusalem of humanity?

Let me tell you. We are preaching, and we preach a good deal, such as it is; Sundays and week-days morning and evening, year by year. We hold meetings of various kinds, for prayer and council. We establish churches wherever there is an opening—sometimes where there is none, doing it in the way of sectarian jealousy or competition. We have training schools for the ministry, where young men are instructed in religious literature, and the theologies, with whatever is deemed necessary to fit them for their vocation. We send out missionaries to every part of the world; and sometimes send them a little money to live on. We organize Sunday-schools for the religious instruction of the children, teaching them to sing, telling them stories, and repeating the words of Scripture. We call conventions, where we go and make speeches, vote resolutions, shake hands with each other, and pat one another on the shoulder—and go home. We publish books and papers with religious titles and aims, thus often trying to yoke together, before the same vehicle, benevolence and business. We distribute Bibles and tracts with the affluence of autumnal leaves. We give money—that is, most people do—some more and some less, generally, perhaps, less. We build churches, with all styles of architecture, good, bad and indifferent. And then, being conscious that somehow the work does not progress as we think it ought, we import or circulate evangelists, to get up a revival.

Is not this, my friends, the way in which our ecclesiastical matters are managed? And yet the walls go up, oh, how slowly! Do you not often say so to yourselves? Do you not go about wondering over it, and occasionally sighing for something better? You hear too, how many men are even beginning to say, "Your Christianity is a failure." I am letting out no secret, for these things are in your newspapers and magazines. And it is the *worst* thing they could say, the most damaging, the most disastrous. For myself, I think there is no occasion for alarm, so far as Christianity is concerned. I believe the divine life of God is in it. Men, too, are discussing the waning power of the pulpit. They assume the fact, and gravely inquire into the causes of this declension. As to the pulpit, whether waning or waxing, I think when God no longer wants it He will dis-

pense with it. But so long as He wishes it, He will be very likely to use it, and doubtless He would use it more if it were better than it is.

But all this, as I look upon it, only puts us back upon the great fundamental truths of which I am speaking this morning. In the beginning of all things, according to the account in Genesis, when the universe lay in chaos, it was the spirit of God that brooded upon the dark and tumultuous elements. This does not mean simply that the wind blew across the face of the waters, but expresses the power or force which the wind symbolizes. This was the formative energy of nature. Without it no star would have ever evolved from the nebulous confusion; nor would the earth have rolled out upon its orbit a completed sphere of continents and oceans. Out of it issued the order of this cosmos, with life, beauty, and everything which caused God to pronounce His creation good.

And so, in the beginning of the Christian Church, the Spirit of God descended upon the assembly at Pentecost. That was the beginning of life in the new creation of humanity. It was the promised endowment with power from on high. It is the same principle expressed by the prophet—"'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,' saith the Lord of hosts."

And it will be found, at the last, I think, that the Divine Spirit is the force of all forces. By this are men inspired *intellectually*. For one may be inspired in either of the various elements of his nature. That is to say, in his understanding, giving him increased capacity of knowledge; or in his reason, by which he shall conduct logical processes, and reach sound conclusions; or in his imagination, enabling him to behold the realities of the invisible and grasp them; or in his faculty of speech, giving him power of utterance and to persuade his fellow-men; or in his emotions, conscience, will, faith and hope, putting a new energy into them, and causing them to work, in their respective offices, with unwonted efficiency. In this way you will have a Bezaleel, who is divinely skilled in all mechanical contrivance; a David, whom God has touched in his imaginative and spiritual nature, singing the psalms of the ages and of the world; a Paul, with the breath of God in his intellect and religious powers, to give the Church the theology of the new gospel.

But, by this same Divine energy, moreover, is mankind *converted* and made morally good. It is an inspiration, not simply for knowledge in the line of a revelation, but as well for character and life in the development of manhood. At the creation God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Adam was the type of all. And this Divine breath must ever remain in man, or he dies. Our Lord likened the Divine spirit to the atmosphere—which is its best analogue. For in its primary sense, spirit is health, air, wind. He said of Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth,

and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Wind thus represents the Spirit in its ubiquity, power, and divinity of operation.

God will regenerate the world, then, not by miraculous displays of might in the physical sphere, but by the secret operations of His spiritual energy upon the human soul. We are not to look for what are usually called miracles, but for the potential spirit-force. The Church must have the olive trees of God's presence overshadowing it and pouring into it, out of the ever-flowing sap of the Spirit, the oil of eternal life.

Our agencies, our apparatus, our ecclesiastical machineries, are well devised and adapted. I do not come to find fault with them. But it is essential, forevermore, that they be filled with this force from above.

Throughout the world, to-day, are stretched the multitudinous wires of the telegraph system, across the continents and under the seas; the magnetic batteries are constructed and placed in position ready for operation. But what would all these be worth if the electric force should once be withdrawn? You might hear the click of the operator at the keys, but no message would speed around the world, from city to city and place to place. So with our church mechanisms, our manifold religious contrivances. And, as one listens, is it not true that he hears everywhere the click of the keys, while comparatively little passes along the wires of Christendom, announcing the progress of the kingdom of Heaven?

You have often noticed how much more easily one man works than another. They are trying to do the same thing. But while one toils and tugs laboriously, with exhausting effort, the other accomplishes it with apparent ease. In assigning a reason, you say one has talent while the other has genius, and genius implies some degree of inspiration. It is not simply a better combination of faculties, but there is in it the breadth of a diviner force. This is illustrated in the preaching of the Apostles. They were ordinary men for the most part. They were not men of extraordinary intelligence, culture, attainments—as we reckon such things; and yet what a wonderful efficiency appeared in their utterances and work! There are ten thousand better sermons preached every Sunday than the average discourses of these men—that is, better homiletically, better oratorical constructions, so far as literature and rhetoric are concerned. And yet, when you consider the results, the moral and spiritual effects produced, they cannot be compared with the utterances of those early preachers. You may reply they were Apostles and we are not. Yes; but what is the secret of this disparity?

There are ten thousand locomotives in the engine-rooms of the world. Men are busy rubbing and polishing them, moving the pistons and working the valves to see if they are all right, and they seem

to be in perfect order. But there they stand, with grand capabilities. But look, yonder is one thundering across the continent, hurling the traffic of the globe. It is filled with steam. The mighty vapor rushes along all its metallic veins and arteries, hissing through valve and outlet, roaring in tumultuous escapes, making the ponderous machine thrill and tremble with exuberant energy—till, like a living creature of resistless power, it drives rod and crank and thundering wheel with swiftest motion. It is not a difference in mechanism, but in force. So is it with our sermons. They need steam. Not the heated vapor of nervous energy, not physical excitement. They do not need any more of loud talking, of pounding pulpit furniture, of rhetorical storm and thunder, but of inspiration from the Divine force. Once let this into them, and their logic, rhetoric, learning, imagination and pathos, will draw crowded trains into the kingdom of Heaven.

This is what you, too, brethren, need in your prayer meetings. How few are interested there! How small the average attendance! Many times how dull, how stupid and dead! The best of you often find it hard work to maintain your enthusiasm. How cold and formal the prayers! What productions of routine and habit, the familiar exhortations! What a drag and listlessness in song! The apparatus is good enough; but it only rattles till the power from on high comes into it. And this, too, is what you, teachers, need in your Sunday-school. You teach remarkably well; some of you with much skill and ability. But all your lessons, your entertaining stories, your appeals, are comparatively void and barren, because of this absence of the Divine force. When you get this, the children, no longer indifferent, will throng the vestibule of the church, asking to be received within.

In a word, this is the secret of success in all Christian work. There is abundance of the noise of machinery on every hand. One hears almost nothing else so much as work! *work!* WORK! Good people are rubbing their hands and pinching their flesh to get up the incitement to greater activity. Let them open the gates of the soul to the breath of God. Until we have this, the wheels of religious progress must continue to drag heavily.

He who has the gift and culture to handle that grandest of all musical instruments—the organ—can do nothing, at his best, but open it to the inspirations of the atmosphere. He presses the keys with finger and foot, draws out the stops, letting in the aerial currents of the skies, and these, breathing through the resonant passages of this musical labyrinth, chant the Divine melodies of earth and heaven. But it remains as voiceless as a statue till God's auras sweeps through it. Without this, the most skillful player can produce only the clatter of the mechanical apparatus. Such are your ecclesiastical machineries, your churches, your preachings and prayings, your Sunday-schools, your benevolent institutions, your Bibles

and creeds, your missions and ministers; nothing but a rattling apparatus, without the Divine inspiration. And such, too, is this realm of material nature, put into the hands of man. Your men of science may explore among the heights and the depths; high priests of knowledge entering into the holy places of the universe; but for their final conclusions I think they will be obliged to wait till God's Spirit breathes through all these material forms and forces. And I look for the day when men, understanding the mysteries of matter and coming into unison with God, shall so handle and use all these material things, that the globe itself shall become one grand organ, which, under the sanctified human touch, shall sound among the stars the praises of the Holy Spirit, and the devout gratitude and love of man.

III.

GOD IS LIGHT.

"This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you that *God is light*, and in Him is no darkness at all." *1st John* i:5.

This is the summing up of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Taking all that our Lord said and did, and all that He was in character, the Apostle reaches the luminous conclusion that God is light. And, moreover, such light as is not to be estimated by what we know of it in this planetary sphere; where days plunge over the western verge into the gulf of night; where noons are often overspread with thick clouds; where the very disk of the blazing sun itself is stained with spots of darkness; but He is light—cloudless, shadowless, nightless—the absolute Light, in whom is no darkness at all. I propose to speak to you this morning upon the inspired declaration that *God is light*.

The same God at whose word the material universe arose out of nothing and stood in its place, with its infinite variety of forms and colors and movements, originated the moral and religious spheres. And there are striking and instructive analogies between the physical and spiritual worlds. As, indeed, there must be, seeing that both proceeded from the same mind, and there is manifestly no intention or desire to conceal their origin.

Such a beneficent and glorious and wonderful thing is the light, that God accepts it as a synonym for Himself. What material light is to the physical universe, that God is to the intellectual and moral universe.

The genius has not yet been born, nor the language framed, capable of portraying the glories of light. Artists mix and mix again with unsparing pains and amazing skill their pigments, but they cannot paint the sunbeam. The best they can do on canvas is to present contrasting shades and call the effect light. But the sun, pouring its cataracts of splendor down the skies and deluging the earth, falling upon mountains and oceans and forests and deserts without the least noise, in strange and unbroken silence, is one of God's incommunicable wonders.

How beautiful and wonderful is the light! Coming up the round globe at dawn, and building, without sound of hammer or saw, on the grey east, out of the morning clouds, temples of such celestial splendor that angels could enter and worship the Creator of the sun. And, streaming from snowy mountain-peaks and the flashing foreheads of

far-enkindled ranges, the dawn pours its glittering tides down the precipitous slopes from crag to crag and from steep to steep, flinging rainbows around a thousand waterfalls and sweeping along the valleys, scattering the shadows, like angels pursuing rebellious spirits of darkness to drive them out of Heaven, unfurling a banner of light in every fountain and dew-drop, and letting fall on flower and blade and leaf and rock the many-colored mantle of nature. From day to day does God re-enact this miracle of sunrise. And, not content with bursting upon the slumbering world with such resplendent surprises, nor with filling the dome of heaven with overflowing effulgence, he causes the evening to march down the west like an army of kings in imperial robes—yea, rather as if God Himself put on the clouds as His garments and walked at sunset on the battlements of Heaven. And there are *victories* of light that ought to be sung in poems, if undertaken at all. When the fury of the storm is broken and the cloudy columns begin to waver and in places give way, the Army of Light, under the banner of rainbows, dashes across the world pursuing the enemy and driving him over the farthest hills and out of sight.

How sweet is the light to the bestormed and benighted mariner, waiting amid the tossing waves and shrieking tempests for the morning! What a beam of glory to the bewildered traveler is the first ray of the dawn that reveals the forsaken path to him! And sunrise to the weary watcher—who can tell what that is like? When, after the lonely and dreary hours of the night have passed, one by one, slowly and full of anxiety and conflicting hopes and fears, the tossings of the soul on the sea of sympathy, you go softly and silently to the window and, drawing aside the curtains just a little, catch a glimpse of the first pale streak of light quivering up the fading east. The morning has come at last! There is light again in the world! This dreadful night has fled away before the kindling dawn. Oh! I do not wonder so much that the heathen sometimes worships the sun. It seems to me, if I were born a pagan and knew not the true God as revealed in Jesus Christ, that, of all the objects of creation in the heavens above or upon the earth beneath, the sun would be my god. So resplendent, so mighty, so all-pervading, so beautiful, so vitalizing, so sweet to the soul is the light.

But when we have gathered up and uttered in varying expressions whatever we can think of as wonderful and glorious in light, we have only gone along the shores of the reality, the great interior remains unexplored. You will understand what the sun is only by extinguishing it. The moon is pale and sheds but feeble rays, and when hanging upon the west, over against the rising sun, seems as nothing, and yet a night with and a night without the moon are almost as strikingly contrasted as the day and night. So, too, the stars seem insignificant drops of light; but the heavens at evening, with not a star visible, show us what every beam of light is worth to the world.

And hence we come through darkness to a better comprehension of the light itself. We should know how to appreciate this resplendent blessing of God if once it were utterly withdrawn from us. If every beam should suddenly be extinguished, the whole world, forgetting everything else, all other interests, wants and desires, would lift itself toward God with the single petition—Give us light! Give us light!

And Lord Byron, in a poem whose sublime imagery is appalling, has set forth the glory of light by means of darkness:

> "The world was void,
> The populous and the powerful was a lump,
> Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
> A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
> The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still,
> And nothing stirred within their silent depths;
> Ships sailorless, lay rotting on the sea,
> And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they dropped
> They slept on the abyss without a surge—
> The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
> The moon, their mistress, had expired before;
> The winds were withered in the stagnant air,
> And the clouds perished! Darkness had no need
> Of aid from them—She was the universe."

Look upon that awful gloom and comprehend the sun. . . .

Certain ideas and moral truths are so associated with light and darkness as to become, even in the most popular speech, synonyms for them. Everybody speaks of the darkness of ignorance and the light of knowledge. There are Christians who never pray for the Chinese and the Persians, and the Turks and the Africans by name, but always for the "dark parts and corners of the world," for the "benighted portions of mankind." Darkness and heathenism mean the same thing.

And in like manner light and civilization are synonymous. The old geographies used to set down certain nations as enlightened or civilized, some as half-civilized, and some as pagan, giving a colored representation of each; and the pagan part was always the darkest.

In our common speech, also, darkness signifies doubt, perplexity, calamity, sorrow, death. In all these adverse conditions the general impression upon the soul is like passing into the gloom of a rayless night. But over against this, light signifies clearness of mind, peace, prosperity, joy and life. When we come into these states it is like the sun rising upon the world; and to abide in them is to dwell in perpetual day.

And in the moral world, comprehensively, darkness signifies sin and light signifies holiness. Hence we have the kingdoms of light and darkness. The good are the children of light; Christians are called such; while the evil are children of darkness. Nor does this dis-

tinction pertain to this world merely. There are angels of light and angels of darkness. There are powers of darkness and the Devil is their Prince. While at the head of the kingdom of light stands our Lord Christ, who is the light, and "in Him is no darkness at all."

It seems a simple thing that the Almighty, in the midst of his creation, utters the fiat, "Let there be light;" and the simple inspired response is, "And there was light." As if nothing more was to be said about it. And indeed what could be said? When God lights up the Universe, the simple fact is beyond description; all that can be said of it is that it was done. And God saw that the light was good. And all his creatures testify that the light is good.

Let me now speak more directly of the assertion that *God is light.* In what sense is He light?

1. Not that He is *perfectly comprehended* by us. It does not mean there is no obscurity in our minds respecting the nature and character of God. It is one thing for God to be light, and quite another for us to be completely luminous in our perception of Him. The sun shines just as brightly whether we behold it or not. Neither do we know what the sun is, nor understand the nature of light. Men have not yet become wise enough to enter into the mysteries of that grand luminary, and tell by what process this resplendent fact of light is produced. The sunbeams fall upon us out of the skies; we walk in the splendor of them, and enjoy the gift of vision; but scientifically, what light is, we cannot yet tell.

So it is of God. We walk in the glory of His presence; our hearts and our lives are luminous by reason of Him shining upon us; but He remains yet beyond the comprehension of our reason.

2. Nor is God light in the sense that His ways in Providence are *always luminous* to us. For they are not and cannot be. He sweeps through circles of Divine operations so large that they must inevitably pass out of our sight—and then we are in the dark. And for this reason He is sometimes represented as having clouds and darkness round about Him—as pavilioned in night. But all this is from the human standpoint. The clouds that sweep heavy and dark through the sky, never touch the sun, but only our eyes, with their trailing garments; and so the clouds that seem to envelop the Providences of God do not diminish His essential brightness, but only obscure our vision. (God is light on the *other* side of the cloud.)

3. But God is light in His own *omniscience.* He knoweth all things; and not a shadow of ignorance or doubt can ever fall upon His luminous mind. We abide in the dark upon a thousand questions; but there is no such question for God. We arrive at truth by investigations, analysis, discussions; and all these ways are through nights and twilights of the understanding; but God is truth, and He abides in its million-sunned splendor. Round about Him also falls

the light of eternal *joy*. *Our* earthly pleasures are only tapers which we light and undertake to carry through the gusty night of life; and how often are they blown out, leaving us in gloom! But God is unapproachable by sorrow in our sense of it, and its shadows can never be cast far enough to reach His throne. The wind which extinguishes the torches which men carry can never blow out the sun, nor cause its flame to waver. And so the joy which dwells in the heart of God is the inextinguishable and unflickering sun.

But more than all, God is light in being *holy*. Afar from him must remain forever the darkness of sin. It is this which beclouds and beglooms us. And it is the Divine Holiness which becomes to our weak moral vision insufferable light.

That is the light toward which the world dare not and cannot look. Many a man can turn his intellect toward the mind of God, as we hold up a mirror to the sun, and catch upon it the splendor of Divine Intelligence. But to turn the conscience that way is to enkindle the fires of shame and remorse. And many are they who dare not do it.

Yet further. There are certain analogies by which this truth may be more effectually set forth than through direct assertion.

Like the light, God is *universal* and *impartial* in his beneficence. The entire circle of Humanity lies under His benign regard. Upon all men throughout the world He looks down with paternal solicitude and sympathy. Though we call it dark in Heathendom, it is not because God's care is limited, or his affection partial.

As it is with the light, it falls not alone on the high mountains lifted so far toward the sun, but as well, and with more warmth even, upon the low valleys. So God especially remembers the poor and weak, and sends down His best blessings and warmest love upon the humble. The light falls upon ocean and continent, upon barren desert and blooming garden, upon the broken roof of the hovel and the splendid walls of the palace, upon the single geranium of the little curtainless window of the poor widow with beams of just as good quality as visit the orange trees in the gilded conservatory of the king.

So God's care and love and sympathy visit *all classes* and *conditions* of men. . . . . .

(The sunbeam upon the mosses in the remote corner of the *forest*.)

. . . . . .

The presence of God, moreover, is *life* to all animate existence. "In Him we live and move and have our being." And this is especially true in the moral and religious world. We grow up on the planet as other animals do, incorporating into our bodies the material elements that lie around us in the earth. And in this lowest phase of the truth we derive our life from God. But upon the moral side of our being—that part which neither the mineral nor vegetable spheres can nourish

or sustain—we are kept in existence peculiarly by the vitalizing power of God. Whatever is morally good in us, whatever is spiritually pure and exalted must be referred directly to the spirit of God. As in nature, the vegetable world turns pale, falling sick even unto death when not visited by the light; and the animal race in protracted darkness must perish; so, as a moral being, man dies out when hidden from the Spirit of God. . . . . .

(Nearness to God is *tropical spiritual* growth: Remoteness from Him is *polar* death and coldness.)

God is light also as the *discloser* of all things. To be in His presence is to stand in the very blaze of the sun. There is no possible concealment in His presence. Every thought, every feeling and motive, and all the devious and intricate courses of life are manifest to Him. Men can by duplicity, hypocrisy, by evasion and false show fling clouds upon the vision of other men, like themselves, deceiving them and escaping their detection; but no such dark arts can be practiced toward God. We can close our doors and keep one another out of our homes; we can shut our hearts and forbid human entrance; but against the all-penetrating gaze of God there are no doors or walls or curtains—no secret places, no obscure retreats.

All *sin* is manifest in the light of His knowledge.

. . . Among the manifold ministrations of light are such as *safety*, *liberty*, *hope* and *joy*.

The Creator has not constructed this planet so that it is safe for its inhabitants to walk abroad at all hours, whether at noontide or midnight. He has not bridged the rivers nor gulfs; has not built balustrades around all precipices; has not covered over all the pits and quicksands; has not cast out of the way all the stones and blocks of stumbling. But He has left the surface of the globe so that security is impossible to the traveler without light. His sunbeams and moonbeams and starbeams are torches to light men as they go and come.

Put out the celestial luminaries, quench the lurid volcanoes, and prevent artificial torches, and the busy millions of the globe must stand still in their places for fear. There would be no safety, no liberty of motion, no hope of progress, no possible joy; but only the danger, bondage, despondency, misery and fear of darkness.

And so the moral world, heaved and broken and cleft by sin, is full of pits and of slippery brinks and of gulfs; so that the human soul has no security in its earthly pilgrimage, but as it possesses and walks in the light of God.

There are thousands sliding day after day and plunging from the steeps of iniquity into the open gulfs of spiritual ruin, because they refuse the light that cometh into the world to enlighten every man. Sin is an extinguisher. Darkness inevitably follows it. But Christ comes to lead us out of the darkness; He is the true light of the world.

Every consideration, therefore, of prudence, of wisdom, of self-preservation, of hope, should lead men to become the children of the light, walking daily in it, that their footsteps may be secure, and their journey of life successful. Over and over again is the vital distinction between Christians and others set forth in Scripture by means of the light as opposed to darkness.

"Children of the *light*"—"of the *day*."

(All true Christians are not *always free* from clouds and darkness).

. . . . . .

Causes of darkness: sin; *neglect of duty*; natural temperament; bodily *infirmities*. . . . . .

(It is our privilege and duty, however, to walk *in the light*; for God is light. *Cheerful, hopeful, joyous* Christians). . . . .

And now, my friends, let me ask you to lift up your eyes an behold heaven as a place of *unclouded brightness*. Every representation of it sets it forth as a realm of indescribable effulgence, of superlative splendor. It is pre-eminently the sphere of light. As in the natural world the earth is a dark planet, being illuminated only as rays from the heavenly bodies fall upon it: so this mortal life is enlightened only as the doors of heaven are opened by revelation, and the beams of the eternal light stream forth upon us. It is a part of heaven's glory that there are no *clouds* there.

No *night* shall be there. No need of the sun, or moon, or stars, or artificial light; *God* is the *light* of it. . . . . .

The very *garments* of the *redeemed* are resplendent in spotless glory. . . . . .

"And white robes were given unto every one of them." . .

The resurrection of the just will be into *eternal day*.

> "Creature all grandeur, Son of truth and light,
> Up from the dust, the last great day is bright;
> Bright on the Holy Mountain round the throne,
> Bright where in borrowed light the far stars shone;
> Regions on regions far away they shine,
> 'Tis light ineffable! 'tis light divine!
> Immortal light and life forevermore!"

May we all here become children of the Light, that we may walk forever glory-robed amid the splendors of Heaven.

IV.

THE DIVINE CARE.

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." *1st Peter*, v:7.

We condemn a man's carelessness when he neglects the plain duty of prudence. For all men hold it right and necessary to be careful, in a certain sense. That is, where safety or good success requires caution, no one can go without it and remain blameless. As a pilot, steering among dangerous rocks; if he should fall asleep, or give his attention to any amusement, and so let the vessel strike and be wrecked, he would be condemned by the best judgment. And if human lives were sacrificed by his recklessness, he would be held verily guilty, though he himself went down with the ship. Here to be careless is to commit crime.

So also in business. If a man neglects favorable opportunities, or withholds proper attention from his affairs, so that they suffer thereby, he falls under the condemnation of all prudent men.

And so, too, in religious matters. If any one allows himself to be so engrossed by any other subject, that he neglects the good of his religious character, all thinking and serious men must regard it as a culpable want of care in this respect. And so it comes to pass that there is a shade of bad meaning thrown upon the word carelessness. But as it almost always happens, there is a good side to the same word. For, by their experience, men learn that cares come upon them like floods; that they need dykes for them as well as for high waters. By and by they become weary of the endless rolling in and breaking upon them of these waves. They become worn by them. Just as along the shores of the sea the rocky margin is wrought into all curious shapes of curve and angle, hollow and jut, by the ceaseless dash of billows. And so, at times, they long for a calm; for a respite from these surging anxieties. Such a state comes to be exceedingly desirable. Men sigh toward it as if it were Paradise. Hence, there is a carelessness, a certain *being without care*, a freedom from the fret and worry of the world, that comes into good repute. Men feel if they could attain to that that they would add greatly to their stock of happiness.

And so they would. But how can it be done? This is the question. And the answer is found in the passage of Scripture placed at the head of this discourse: Cast off all your cares upon God; because He careth for you.

The subject involved in these words, and to which I now solicit your patient attention, is, *The true and good carelessness which mankind may have in this life.*

I say even in this life. For those souls that are to come into Heaven, will find its pearly gates forever closed against care and sorrow. And they are assured that the waves of earthly anxieties, though they break tumultuously upon the portals of the grave, may never pass their boundaries. While those, who, by rejecting Christ, must go down to perdition, will be cast into an ocean of anxious woe, every billow of which is a whirlpool, tossing the soul in an eternal restlessness.

So that if we will be without fretting cares it must be while we are here—under the stars. And now, first of all, let us examine—

1. The *fact—God cares for us.*

If there is a dreary heart in this world, it is the being for whom no one cares. To stand alone, were that possible in the midst of life, with not a ray of thought or affection falling upon the soul, would be intolerable. What a midnight is that, when not a star in all the heavens drops a beam of light upon the earth! Thus to be isolated, cut off from sympathy, dropped out of the very thoughts of others, would be worse than annihilation. To be cared for by those even, who can render us no aid when needed, ministers consolation and encouragement. To be cared for in the happiest and brightest moods of life, when such care is at its least value, is what no one would willingly dispense with. But to have the care of one who has infinite resources of assistance, and at a time when every wind of trouble, under the whole heavens, seems driving its sharpest blast upon you; this is a relief and a joy inexpressibly great.

And so it is, that when a man in great trouble has the consciousness that God now cares for him, it is as when the sun bursts through the storm, pouring a stream of light down upon the world, and revealing the serene blue above.

It is true—God cares for you and for me and for every one, individually, by name, just as we are, and where we are, and what we are. And so the whole race is his family, over whom he watches with fatherly affection and concern. He rolls the planet in its course, and leads you by the hand, my little child, in the same moment.

His thoughts are toward us for good, and have always been. See what magnificent preparation He has made for man's earthly life!

When a father, looking forward to his son's life, erects a stately mansion regardless of expense, so only as to render it beautiful to behold and full of all means of comfort and pleasure, the whole becomes to us an expression of paternal affection and care. And every pillar, every stone, every color and every piece of furniture, is a loving thought of the father's heart thus symbolized.

And so our Heavenly Father, long before the first man came, put

into action the titanic forces of nature, and built this splendid structure of the world; laying deep its foundations and raising its strong walls; rounding it into grace and covering it with vegitable beauty. He made the continents to stand upon, and the oceans to be our reservoirs out of which to draw the showers and fill the fountains; and the high hills to pour the streams back into the seas. What most modern house was ever so conveniently furnished? The eye is delighted with colors and graceful forms; the ear with changing harmonies. Full of landscapes that the best artists cannot copy; hung above and below with pictures; with the grand orchestras of winds and waves and waterfalls, and the sweet choirs of soft-voiced birds, in addition to all that is useful in the commonest parts of life; are not all these thoughts of careful affection?

And not only so, but every time the spring comes it is a new epistle written to us by our Divine Father. The buds and leaves and the flowers are the language. And the letter says: This old commandment I write you anew, my children, that you love Me and one another, even as I love you, and have this perpetual care of you, as you see.

Every sunrise is an epistle from God. . . . . .

It is nothing but downright atheism that you see in many men's lives who care for none of these things. They have never discovered but one beautiful object in the world, and that is the veins of gold that run among the rocks. They scorn these things as sentiment—as if making money and eating were nobler and better.

These are the men that have to go into churches to find God. The world is so full of devils to them that they think God and goodness can find no place in it. So they cast him out of their thoughts while they are in business. They heap up their cares on shoulder and head, stooping beneath the burdens six days, and then go to worship on the Sabbath still bearing their loads. As you often see in Papal countries market women coming into cathedrals with their burdens to say their prayers on their way home.

How shall such men ever know that God cares for them? They do not believe it evidently; for they never trust Him with any of their concerns. His voice is everywhere, and His words open to every eye; but they neither hearn or see. Is it true that God means something by these forms and facts of nature? Or is it only a dumb show? Our Saviour answers this clearly, I think, when He teaches his disciples not to worry themselves with anxious thoughts about the morrow. He takes the lily, holding it up in its beauty, and declares that it out-Solomon's Solomon in all his glory. Who clothes this lily? Who cares for the twittering birds? And shall the God who does these things not take care of man? He who paints the lily, and far up on the mountain-peak which the foot of man may never treads, gives the modest moss its exquisite texture and delicate forms, adapting it to its

altitude—shall He not look after the creature most like Himself, made in His own image, and fitted to know, love and obey him?

Oh, who so tender and affectionate and careful of us as He who created us, as He who accompanies our daily walk, as He who has given us salvation by the mystery of His own incarnation and suffering and resurrection?

Why, God so penetrates ourselves and our life that He is nearer to us than any other being can be. Those who love us look after us with the tenderest concern. But who enters our very soul, observing the strife of passions and war of appetites and the play of intellectual and moral powers? Who keeps in order the wondrous mechanism of the human frame and sustains the perpetual motion of physical life? See how the mother follows her child through the garden. She is ever near to check a fall, to guide into the right path, to listen and respond to the artless prattle, to soothe the bruised foot and kiss the little hand hurt by the deceiving thistle. But God follows you, both saint and sinner, with a solicitude such as no mother ever felt. Look back upon your life and see how He has been upon your right hand and on your left; how He has gone before in darkness and followed in danger; how He has lifted you up and kept you from falling. . .

God's care is changeless and never wanting. It is for all men in all conditions. It is for the rich as well as the poor, for the slave, for the wretch in dungeons, for the waiting prisoners, for the widow pinched in poverty and oppressed by sorrow, for the orphan in loneliness, for the outcast withering in friendlessness, for the sinner perishing in his guilt, for the saint struggling toward the heavenly crown. There is no one so low, so high, so remote, as to be beyond this care. And every soul may feel itself embraced by the arms of this Divine solicitude.

And now, if we admit and realize the fact that God cares for us, let us proceed to consider—

2. The duty and privilege based on this fact, viz.: *Cast all your care upon Him.* What! All my cares, my petty troubles, anxieties and perplexities? Can the Infinite God care for such things? Stand up and face the truth. Do not be measuring God by your own littleness. I should think that a God, who can make a perfect animal so small that you can see it only with a microscope, might equally well look after microscopic human cases. Are your cares small when you have to bear them alone, or when you look at them in the presence of the Omnipotent? God regards them as related to you, and measures them by your littleness and weakness. They are as great to Him as they are to us; for He comes into our place perfectly by His sympathy, and feels just the burden which is on our hearts.

The Divine injunction is, cast *all* your cares upon Him. Not the great ones only, as you call them, but the small ones as well. Many persons shoulder their own troubles and carry them until they become

so heavy as to break them down. And then they go after God as a kind of convenience in an emergency. When some peculiarly huge wave of care strikes them, dashing them down and driving the brine and the sand into their eyes, and filling their ears with the roar of submerging billows, then they cry lustily for Divine help. But such desire of God has no better basis than the prayers offered from the decks of burning ships by men who never prayed before. While upon the shore they stood secure in self-confidence, as if God's care were wholly unnecessary. But now that their standing-place is gone and the deep opens beneath their feet, they seem seized with a sudden desire to be saved by the very God they have neglected.

Divine mercy and love may even assist men in such straits, forgiving the insult. But what would you think of a friend who never came to you except when in trouble? At other times he neither writes letters, nor calls upon you, nor asks after your welfare; in short, he ignores your existence until he wants to borrow more money. And then he enters your house in great haste and sets forth his embarrassment with much earnestness. You furnish him, and he departs into his silence again until a similar occasion brings him to you.

You must be an exceedingly generous man and very kind and charitable not to suspect that this friend regards your money only and not yourself. But men treat God precisely in this manner. When they have a care too heavy for them, they ask Him to carry it. Whereas it is our privilege to cast the whole burden of our care upon God. And I mean by this something more than religious doubts and spiritual perplexities, which all professing Christians are perhaps ready enough to do. But there seems to be a prevalent impression that there is a shade of irreverence in going to God with business troubles. In commercial embarrassments men only knit their brows more closely, compress their lips, and nerve themselves up to the emergency. If it happens to be a particularly dark and hard time, and especially if they themselves feel the sand sliding under their own feet, they may be moved to stretch out their hands toward the pillars of Divine power. But so long as they think that they are quite able to stand alone, they are very sure to do it.

Such men do not at all possess the good carelessness which they might and should have. They are perpetually worried. This is a significant expression—*a careworn countenance.* A face channeled and worn by anxieties. Just as rocks over which streams, though small, are ceaselessly running and wearing out their channels, and so leave their history on the face of the granite.

And if it were only the face that is furrowed by the plows of care, it would be of small consequence. But this is only the external tracery of what is most intensely real in the soul. So are there deep grooves in the heart through which roll perpetual streams of care. And for what? Why, for that which a flash of lightning or the torch of an

incendiary may dissolve in clouds of smoke, or which a sudden fall of market rates may sink out of sight. There is hazard in this investment, and danger in that enterprise, and uncertainty in this new scheme, and anxiety about the next steamer from Europe; fears of war and fears of drought worrying the soul, as hounds chase and worry the trembling deer. What kind of a life is this for any man to lead, and especially a Christian! How is this fitting the soul to feel the gentle breathings of the Holy Spirit? Or to yield to the sweet leading of the Divine love? And, to put it on a lower and more selfish ground, how is this preparing to enjoy God in heaven hereafter!

Why, it must be said, such men for the most part look forward to those mansions of bliss as quiet, curtain-shaded dormitories; where they shall rest—rest—and slumber, sleeping off the worry and weariness of this lower world of care. But let him remember that dreams creep under the canopy of sleep. . . . . .

But you say these things must be done. Men must live and support their families.

The world also must march in its development and growth. Obviously these things must be. And Christian men are best fitted to engage in them. But I believe a man will make just as safe an investment, or undertake just as promising an enterprise, and with better assurance of success, by doing it under the Divine guidance and committing it to God's will, and so throwing off all anxiety about it, as if he tried himself to shoulder the world.

Suppose the farmer should fill the spring and summer full of anxieties about the autumn. He watches the clouds, if there are any, lest they shall not sail over his fields. Or, if they do, then he is filled with apprehension lest they pour down torrents in fatal abundance. He lets no grass grow between him and his thermometer; for he runs hourly to see whether there may not be scorching frost or burning heat.

Not so if he is a wise man and a Christian. He sows his seed, doing his work faithfully, and then waits patiently, saying, God controls the wind and the rain, the heat and the cold; this is His world, and I am willing He should have His own way in it. I am His servant, His steward, and He will send me what seems to Him best. Thy will, O God, be done.

So it is the privilege of every man in his business to rest confidently in God; receiving from His hand submissively and cheerfully whatever it may please Him to send.

Moreover, there are men who are always worrying about the way the world is going. Sin prevails; crime is rampant; customs are changing; new principles come into the front rank of power. What once conserved the general good, seems now without force. And the race, on the whole, seems to them going express to perdition.

Reformers of this stamp, unwilling to leave anything to Divine

wisdom, grow impatient under delay. They will not do their duty cheerfully, laboring for the good of man, and so leave the result with God, rolling their cares upon Him. But they bind upon themselves great burdens of anxiety. You would think they had assumed the responsibility of reforming the world, and would excuse Divine Providence from any more concern in it. Hence, their peace is undermined by care. They carry clouds in their eyes, and fall into misanthropic moods; and, finally, drop into a chronic disgust and die miserable.

Then, too, there is that mysterious to-morrow. God marches time out of eternity, by days, single file, as soldiers march out of a garrison through a narrow gate. And so we see none until it is on the threshold.

But we cannot accept this plan of Infinite wisdom, and must worry ourselves by guessing what the next will be, and the next, and the next. Hence out of the uncertainty of the future men draw great loads of anxiety, although our Savior has said expressly, "Take no thought for the morrow"—that is, do not worry yourselves with unnecessary cares respecting the future.

It is a shame that men are so far behind the animals in their trust in God. What would you think of a young lion roaring for prey a month in advance? Or an eagle screaming from his mountain crag for a next year's lamb?

Yet we, rational creatures, must destroy the peace of the present by troublesome guesses at the future. O, that we could believe what our Father says, and trust in Him. That we could do present duty and leave the rest with Him. That we could form plans with such wisdom and foresight as He has given us, and then go forth to the execution of them believing that He has all issues in His own hands. That we could have such confidence in Him as to be willing to be frustrated in our own designs, if His will requires it.

And to the young this truth comes with peculiar force. You are now in the morning of life, and the unknown hours are before you. Are you ambitious, seeking fame and power? Do your present duty faithfully, earnestly, confidently, fearlessly, though you drop into a gulf of obscurity so deep that the line of ages could not reach you. And thus have this assurance that you are not obscure in the eyes of God, and He will lift you up and crown you—if it is best. If not, He will send by the hand of His angels—nay, He will bring it Himself—a crown, whose gold is peace and whose diamonds joy, for your soul in that place which He has prepared for you. You will not be unknown, for your name will be written in the Lamb's book of life. And you shall have the power of a holy character, in comparison with which the powers of this world are weakness and nothingness. But you must trust God. You must commit yourself wholly to Him. You must come to desire His will before your own. And now is the

time to learn this sublime lesson. Do it early in your life. Ask God to teach you this wonderful prayer—"Thy will be done." And this submission will be a fountain from which sweet rivers of peace shall flow through your whole earthly life.

And so we come to observe another idea of this command to cast all your care upon God. Cast it not only upon God, but also *off from yourself*. Some men go to God and tell Him all their troubles, and ask Him to take them, and then go out into the world and forthwith shoulder all their burdensome anxieties, struggling along and groaning under them as if they had not asked God to take them. This is nothing else than downright practical atheism. Or, if they even recognize God, they have no more confidence in Him than commercial men have in the ocean with vessels. A merchant in one city sends out a cargo of cotton; and in another a load of iron; and in another a load of sugar. So that the vast expanse of water is covered with embarked cares, sailing in all directions under the sun. And every one of these ships has been launched in a two-fold manner—once upon the deep, and once upon the heart of the owner.

Such practical suspicion of God do men seem to have. But when you have launched a care upon the infinitude of Divine sympathy and love, let it go. God holds the reins of the whirlwind in His hands, driving them whithersoever He will, and spreads the clouds at His pleasure. So launch your cares and let them go, through sunshine and through storm, and you shall have peace in your soul.

And now this true and good carelessness, which mankind may have, is the farthest from stoical indifference. It makes us none the less prudent, considerate, wise, foresighted. Instead of unfitting for life, it is the only condition in which we can fulfill, in the best manner, our daily duties. And so, it is not only our privilege but our *duty*. For we are here for something more and higher than to stupefy and kill the soul with anxieties about minor things. We have no right to wear ourselves out in this manner—to let these clouds of care rise up and hide God from view and chill our love to Him.

If mankind would be careful for Christ and the soul and spiritual purity, for truth and righteousness and peace in the world, there would be some argument for it. But the cares that destroy are those which concern the most insignificant things.

And, now, the Christian alone can possess this true and good carelessness. For he only has confidence in God. As the Scriptures say, "truly, there will be no peace to the wicked."

When the lake is swept by the wind it is covered with ripples, making the surface rough and dim, neither reflecting anything above, nor revealing anything below. But when the storm has passed, it rolls out into a smooth, shining expanse, in which the shores, with their trees and flowers, are mirrored, and from which the moon and stars are reflected, till another heaven, full of serene beauty, seems to have dropped into the placid deep.

So when the Christian comes to a fixed trust in God, and rolls off all his care upon Him, and his heart is full of Divine love, there comes in a wonderful serenity that flows out into his life and reflects always the beauty and peace of Heaven. Then he becomes like God in his sublime peacefulness and repose. And he walks out into the world a child of God, careful only to please Him, to love Him, and be loved by Him ; leaving all the issues of life to the pleasure of the Divine will.

V.

FISHERS OF MEN.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." *Matt. iv* : 19.

Simon, the fisherman, caught fish for a livelihood; but Peter, the Apostle, was called to catch men for the glory of God and their own salvation. This is the difference between Simon Peter's old vocation and his new one. The business to which he had been bred, and which he carried on for the support of his family, was an humble calling, wherein he might have continued a few years, and then died and been forgotten. But the new business to which God called him, has given him a glorious position in history, with a reputation extending every year, and destined to be well known in every land and by every people under heaven. For where the name of Christ is found on earth, there Simon Peter's will be not far off.

The Apostles were not called merely to be themselves saved from eternal death, but to be the instruments of salvation to others. They were *Disciples*, in that they learned the Gospel from Christ; and they were *Apostles* because they were sent with this Gospel into the world to gather other disciples and commission other apostles.

And every one who becomes a Christian becomes both a *Disciple* and an *Apostle*. These titles are not to be exclusively appropriated to the *Original Twelve*.

It was an impossible thing for Peter and his brother to understand, just then, what was expected of them in the new sphere to which they were summoned. If our Lord had said to them, "Come, now, I will make you Apostles," the language would have been unintelligible. They had no notion whatever of apostleship. But he turns them from their old to their new callings upon the pivot of a plain metaphor.

Finding Simon and Andrew one day busy casting their nets into the lake, Jesus of Nazareth accosts them with these words: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." There was an intelligible idea in that, and they immediately followed Him. They did not, to be sure, comprehend all that was included in the metaphor; but there was something about fishing in it, and they understood that fact of it. They were not to dip into the lake any more as they had done, but into the human world; their old net was to be exchanged for some kind of a new one, and with it they were to catch men instead

of fish. And in the dawning light of this new idea, glimmering upon their minds, they arose and followed Christ. They left their fishing boats on the shore and went to be the foremost men in the history of the Christian church. And of the glory of that exchange of vocation you and I are witnesses this day—after eighteen centuries—as well as being actual partakers in its ample benefits.

1. Every man has a vocation, or ought to have, whereby he maintains himself and those who are naturally dependent upon him. Some men labor with their hands, others with their feet, others with their voice, and others with a more exclusive use of the intellectual powers. But throughout all these varieties of calling, we perceive the one ground and aim—*self-support*. People labor for a living and think for a living, and all that they thus do has direct reference to themselves. It is not the order of society that its members seek and labor for each other's maintenance. The farmer, to be sure, cultivates the grains and fruits that a thousand others are to feed upon, but he does it, I think, not so much for their support as to supply himself and family with comforts and luxuries. The railroad managers transport passengers and harvests and animals from one region to another, not, I suppose, with the purely benevolent purpose to accommodate others and serve them, but to make money for themselves. Merchants collect from distant ports the goods of general traffic and send them out to the localities of demand, not because they are so benevolent that they wish to see every man comfortable and well supplied, but to furnish themselves with the means of living. Banks are not places where kind-hearted gentlemen keep stacks of money to give out to the needy whenever they will call. Brokers' establishments are not simply offices of generous accommodation. Commission men do not offer their services to act between producers and markets for the sake of the service altogether, but probably for the convenient percentage. Even publishers and newspaper proprietors, I presume, have it not for their supreme purpose to enlighten and edify the public. Insurance companies are not composed of those who are so sympathetically affected by losses of property and life that they stand ready with money to help all unfortunate sufferers by fire and death. But in every one of these various departments of business, what men are in pursuit of is to obtain the means of livelihood for themselves. Or they carry them farther, and make them the vehicles of avaricious or ambitious accumulations. Neither have we sufficient evidence to think that lawyers and judges always enter upon their vocation, or practice it with the main design to promote law, order, justice and harmony in society. Nor is it necessary to suppose that all physicians even, who do so much good in healing the bodies of men, are moved unto their arduous labors by the supreme and sole desire to mitigate physical sufferings and bestow the blessings of health upon mankind. (What shall I say of ministers? . . . .

Observe: I am not speaking *against* this *self-directed* use of the business vocations; this is right and necessary: . . . . . I employ them to *illustrate* my subject.)

But the *Christian calling* is an exception to all these; it is peculiar. When our Lord summoned Simon Peter to his new vocation, it was not that he could make more money by it, or make it easier than he had done by fishing in the sea of Galilee. He presented him a calling of wondrous honor and advantage, but also of extraordinary sufferings and self-denial. The master called these poor fishermen to thrones and crowns, but he called them to go through fire in order to reach them. And so is it always with this grand and lofty vocation; it is a Divine call to a crown and a cross, and the cross comes first.

2. It is to be considered, therefore, that the call which every genuine Christian receives from the Lord differs in its nature and purpose from all others. Christianity restores mankind to their proper relations, and gives them the right spirit wherewith to abide in those relations and to perform the incumbent duties. Under the gospel there is to be no human hatred, no wicked envying, no injurious rivalries; but a harmonious and fraternal spirit that shall promote the welfare of all.

It was never intended that men should make merchandize of each other or of each other's interest. There is room enough in the world for all whom God is pleased to send into it. There is ground enough for them to dwell upon and be buried in, air enough to breathe, light enough to see with, and bread and water enough to eat and drink. God has created some large animals to subsist by devouring smaller ones; but He never made a class of big men to feed upon the little ones. Large fish chase the small ones through the sea for their natural food; large beasts pursue the small ones through the wild forest for their daily meat; but human society was never meant to be a sea or a forest where the large and strong should destroy the small and feeble. A different law of relations and a different spirit prevail here.

Nevertheless, as the world goes, we do see just these habits and customs of the lower realms of creation adopted in the higher. We see how the Devil, walking on the shores of life, calls to mankind and says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The *Devil's* style of *Human Fishery;*
The *strong* catching the *weak;*
The *rich* catching the *poor;*
The *wise* catching the *ignorant;*
The *cunning* catching the *simple;*
The *prosperous* catching the *unfortunate.* . . .

Christianity brings mankind into that state where they heartily desire and truly seek each other's entire welfare. There is a tendency to

selfishness in the majority of human callings. I admit, of course, the right and duty of self-preservation, and I admit, furthermore, that in the callings which form the means used for daily subsistence there must of necessity be a certain kind and degree of self-seeking ; and yet who does not know that this necessity is carried over into an excess that constitutes a wicked and harmful selfishness ? Who does not perceive that men, for the most part, look out exclusively for themselves ? Who has not seen that the radical principle of society is "every one for himself ?" If benevolence is recognized and beneficence is exercised, it seems to be as a gratuity *very meritorious*, and not as an eternal obligation. Many people in giving alms appear to do it as something *extra* and not contained in their catalogue of *duties*, as if they *could* withhold the alms if it suited their sovereign pleasure, and no one would have a right to say aught against it. Such a sentiment is false. If we regard the Divine laws, we are as much bound by them to be benevolent and kind as we are not to steal or kill. And we shall be called to render an account at the judgment for the one as well as the other.

Now, the vocation of the Christian is right against this rushing stream of worldly selfishness. He is called to love his fellow men truly, warmly, and with a just affection. Hence, in the Scripture it is made a test of practical piety that a man love his brother, and that means his fellow man. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?" And I care not how pious any one may profess to be or may appear to be, I care not how many times a day he may read his Bible and pray, he may weep and pray and exhort in the prayer-meeting and talk religious language from Monday morning till Sunday night, if he does not possess the spirit of love for his fellow men, if he does not live in the exercise of kindness, forgiveness, charity, forbearance, benevolence, if he does not possess and manifest a sincere interest in the entire welfare of others, if he shuts himself up in selfishness and indifference, that man's piety is vain—it is a sham. God will sift it at the judgment, and the breath of condemnation, like a tempest, will sweep it as chaff into the pit of quenchless fire.

But Christians, by their very calling, are brought into peculiar relations to their fellow men, and these relations involve special duties. It may be said that their vocation is an exclusive one, for it includes all others. Whatever worldly business a follower of Christ may pursue, whether he works with his hands, or feet, or voice, or brain, he has a calling in addition to that and above that. To be sure in his temporal vocation he is to keep in practice whatever is right, and good and true, and to deal justly always with his fellow men.

But when all this is accomplished, and in the accomplishing of it, he has another business on hand, which God appoints to be his *main*

business. He is to look upon men not merely as members of society, or as beings capable of enjoyment and misery in this world, but as *immortal* spirits. Others may regard mankind in their physical and social and intellectual natures and wants, but the Christian must see every man as one for whom Christ suffered and died, and must feel that these sufferings and this death were necessary for salvation. We who are Christians must see every human being in that new light which God kindled on Calvary—in the effulgence of the Cross. . .

Christ is the *magnifying lens* through which we see the *human soul.* . . . . (Every Christian is called to the great work of *personal salvation*—not *his own merely*, but that of *all others whom he can influence.* . . . . The selfishness of *going to Heaven alone!* . . . .

The Christian is called to be a *fisher of men* in the *Lord's*, not *Satan's*, *fishery.* . . . .

It is the *men themselves* he is to catch, not for *his own advantage*, but for *their own salvation* and the *glory of God.*)

1. And now the peculiar nature of this vocation implies *attention* to the *work.* Everybody knows that men do not fish by *accident.* The net must be cast and the line must be tossed out in order to have any piscatorial success whatever. And so the gospel art of saving souls is one that requires attention and purpose. Christians are not to be content with merely exerting a moral influence upon others. They are to do as much as this, of course, but there is something more to be done. Undoubtedly there is great power in example. Many an impenitent soul is caught in the net of a good example; many a darkened sinner is savingly illumined by the light of a genuine Christian life. But the duties of these fishers of men are not exhausted by the silent influence of a good example. Especially not when, as often happens, Christians understand by their example simply moral conduct. There are those who appear to think that if they are honest, upright, just in all their intercourse with mankind, they are doing well enough as Christians. But, let me ask, do not Christians profess to be something more than mere moralists? They are, of course, expected faithfully to perform their duties to their fellow men, but is there not a higher life than this? Have they not duties to God as well? And this higher life, as well as these God-ward duties, are they matters of secrecy? Are Christians to be visible on their moral side and invisible upon the spiritual? Is that light of which Christ the Lord speaks when he calls Christians the light of the world simply a *moral* light? I think not.

(Illustrate: Christians who are wont to say when urged to special religious duties, "I am not qualified to take part in public meetings, to speak, and pray, and teach a class in the Sabbath school, I can do more by my example." What kind of example? . . .

Negative examples, such as do no *open* violence to moral *principle.*

. . . . *Every* Christian is to be a *fisher* of men; example is like setting a pole when you go to business in the morning, and looking at the hook in the evening. You were not converted merely on your *own account; God has need of you.* . . .)

But it is asked, "May not a person be a Christian and yet never do anything *directly* for the salvation of others?" Well, I don't know *how low down* it is possible to enter Heaven; for I suppose in this question, that being a Christian and going to Heaven are synonymous phrases. There may be a side door to admit such as have never done any specific Christian work on earth, and so are not worthy to enter through the royal gate of pearl. I have no revelation on that point. God only knows whether there is any entrance prepared for such or not.

But at all events, let no one imagine that conversion means only going to the secretary's office and getting a passport for Paradise. Regeneration does not consist in a mere bill of exemption from the future consequences of sin. It is a radical change of will and character. There comes with it a new sense of human relations and personal obligations; there comes with it naturally and, I may say, necessarily an unwonted yearning after the salvation of others. And any professing Christian who has no real desire for the conversion of others, and such a desire withal as shall beget earnest and persistent effort, has sufficient ground, I think, to *suspect* his Christian hope, and be alarmed for himself. A Christian profession is surely but very little in itself; it is good and valuable and necessary as an exponent of an interior reality; but when it is only a banner floating over an abandoned fort, it is a mockery, having nothing to represent.

There are those who live without any active concern in the salvation of their neighbors and friends, and who feel condemned on account of it, in spite of all the shallow and false excuses which they render to their own accusing consciences, and who cherish perhaps the thought that, although it is not right, yet the day will come when they can do better, or at least upon the bed of death they will repent, and God in His mercy will forgive them and take them in. I warn them against such selfishness and meanness toward God. Such a death-bed repentance, devised beforehand and for a supremely selfish purpose, is condemned in itself. Trust it not as you value your soul. And I am forced to believe there are many living out of the line and course of Christian duty, consciously so, who are entertaining the expectation of making up with God before they die. But consider it: "If ye have not the *spirit* of Christ ye are none of his." Can such supreme and mean selfishness abide in the same soul with Jesus Christ? It seems to me impossible.

2. The peculiar vocation of the Christian, moreover, demands *skill*. "He that winneth souls is wise," and must have wisdom to do it. Now, there are many Christians who excuse themselves by saying

that they have not the requisite gifts for this work—in short, they don't know how to make converts to the gospel. In the first place, I should ask such persons, Is it a matter of sincere regret to you that you do not possess these gifts, or is it rather a relief to your conscience? Do you *desire* to know how to win souls, or do you rest complacently in this ignorance of your peculiar and main business on earth?

Now, I believe in diversities of gifts, in varieties of talent, in grades of ability, both natural and acquired. But there is not a Christian living, not a man or woman or child, who has capacity enough to be a real Christian, who has not capacity enough also to catch some other soul with the gospel net or hook. If this capacity is not developed or brought into exercise, whose fault is it? If any servant of the Lord buries his talent, will he render as an excuse for his uselessness that he had hid his Lord's money? But the difficulty is, that many do not *try to learn;* they give no evidence that they have any desire to become wise in winning souls for Christ. They do not set about the duty of informing themselves upon the subject, as they very easily might do, and just as they certainly would do if called to any new position or office in the world. . . .

Some excuse themselves, saying, I am not in a *right state* myself, and should do more harm than good. Very likely *true;* but are you guiltless in being in that bad state?

(*Injudicious* and *unskilful* labor *may* do more harm than good.

Need of skill: let us return to the figure of the text.

Even stupid *fish* are not to be caught without *some wit*, much more *men*. . . . . The *character* and *habits* of fish to be *studied* by *fishermen*.

Various kinds of fishing: *drawing nets*, *still*-fishing with *hooks*; *whipping* the *stream*, *trolling*.

So in respect to *men*. . . . . There must also be *proper bait*. The *real* or *artificial* fly, bug, worm, or something like; the *very food for the kind of fish*. *Bare hook* will not do; the *line* must not be a *cable* nor the *hook* a *sheet-anchor*, nor the *pole* a *mast;* an *adaptation* to the *character* and *habits* of men necessary. . . . Christians must understand *human nature*.

Consider, also, that fishing is done in the *sea*, in *lakes*, and in *streams*. . . . .

And thus Christians are to seek souls in the *community*, in the *family*, and along the *busy thoroughfares of life*.

What an agent of salvation in a community a *church* would be in which every *member* was alive to the duty and privilege of winning souls for Christ.) . . . .

But, furthermore, the Christian's *heart* must be in his work. If he undertake it mechanically he will certainly fail. Men and women are very quick to detect the spirit with which they are approached, and

especially sensitive to this are they when the subject presented is personal salvation. If you go to them with a hard, dry, professional manner, you will put them into a corresponding state and do them no good. If you do not feel deeply what you say, but use the language of cant with the frosty air of mere duty blowing through your entire conversation and carriage, you will only lengthen the icicles of indifference instead of melting them from the eaves of the impenitent heart. It sometimes happens that Christians, after a long time, are some day suddenly seized with a spasm of conscience, and thereupon rush forth and lay hold of the first ungodly man they meet, and begin to belabor him with the cudgel of religious rebuke. But with the first blow the door of the heart closes, and every succeeding stroke only turns a key or slides in another bolt fastening it more securely.

Now, what such Christians need as a preparatory work, is to go into their closets and stay there, in prayer and meditation and self-examination, until their own hearts are melted by the spirit of God into tenderness, and then issuing forth they will succeed. If you will render others soft-hearted you must yourself be tender.

There are several ways by which Christians may prevent their own success :

By an *inconsistent life* or bad example; by a wrong *spirit* and *manner ;* by a want of *careful preparation.* . . . .

Qualifications for a fisher of men: A genuine *spirit* of *love ;* an appreciation of the *value of the soul;* a profound and tender interest in the *particular case*, and a *fervent desire* for his *salvation.* Above all, be filled with the *Holy Spirit. Follow Me* and I will *make* you fishers of men.

Learn of Christ Himself.

VI.

THE IMMUTABILITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and forever." *Heb. xiii:* 8.

To-day is like a city whose walls rise till they touch the clouds. Out of one gate are going the yesterdays, with spent voices of joy or sorrow, ever receding into the dim and far land of recollection. In at another gate are coming like veiled figures emerging from the night, the unknown to-morrows, voiceless till they touch the streets of the present, but despatched by God with messages to us, whose words we listen moment by moment to hear.

Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow; these are our divisions of the ever-marching grand army of days.

Our yesterdays depart with sacred urns in their hands, taking with them the ashes of our consumed pleasures, of our faded hopes, a thousand delights, out of which the sap and blood of life have gone.

Our to-days are the noisy, struggling, visible and tangible facts which constitute what we call real life.

Our to-morrows are sealed letters, which lie unopened and unseen in the mail-bag of the future. What we shall read we know not, and it does not become us to be anxious or over inquisitive.

To these three divisions of time we refer everything. They claim us and all our affairs, and will take no denial. They are beyond our control, coming whether we wish them or not; going, however much we might desire to detain them.

The sun rises and lets in the day, though we would gladly keep the shutters closed upon the windows of the east; and the evening closes them and draws the curtains, though we might rejoice to have them opened a hundred years.

And more than this. There is not only such a movement of days over us and round about us, but time marches its army of days right through us—through our brains, our hearts and our bodies.

Nor is this all. It does not leave us as it found us. *We* are not the same yesterday, to-day and to-morrow. We are in a process of development—either opening into the better or the worse, blossoming for good or for evil. This perpetual sweep of time carries us forward not only outwardly but also inwardly. And sometimes the changes between yesterday and to-day are immense and unexpected. Men have gone to bed Kings and waked up throneless exiles; have retired rich and arisen poor; have fallen asleep famous, and opened

their eyes to perceive themselves infamous. Within the small circle of this trio, yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, literally men's condition, circumstances and prospects have been revolutionized.

We see, then, that what is declared of Jesus Christ in the text is something different from the common truth respecting man; it is lifted above the merely human into a sphere that we dare not speak of as less than Divine. That Being across whom days, years, and ages can take their ceaseless flight without producing any more change than does the flight of an eagle, or a cloud over a peak of the Andes, cannot be less than Deity.

A Being, therefore, who is found to be superior to this necessity that is laid upon all mankind, to be changed by the advance of time; a Being, indeed, so exalted that the circuits of ages sweep far beneath Him—as the currents of winds beneath the sun—must be such as to challenge our admiration and reverence. . . . . .

The disciples were amazed when from our Lord's uplifted hand the angry winds fell voiceless into the sea, and the tumultuous billows bowed their heads and slid down out of sight under the smooth floor of the lake's miraculous calm. In that sublime and marvelous scene there was evidence enough of the *power* of Jesus. Just then if the Master had raised His hand toward the heavens and commanded the stars to drop out of the sky, the disciples would have expected to see a shower of stars pouring from the clouds. Christ manifested and demonstrated His divine power by means of His miracles. His moral purity, also His sinlessness, were shown and proved by His life on earth, into which never crept one least element of evil. From budding infancy to ripening manhood, through all the tempted and perilous stages of human life, He never thought, felt, nor did a wrong thing. He lived in changeless holiness.

Likewise the divineness of His *love* was demonstrated by His renowned sufferings and death, which have risen by their own grandeur into the first place in history. Every day we live there are hundreds of thousands thinking of the betrayal, scourging, buffeting, thorn-crowning and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, where one remembers the poisoning of Socrates. There are millions upon our planet to-day who are looking to those sufferings and that death as their hope of everlasting life; but not a man can be found who expects to be saved from his sins and the spiritual penalties of them, because Socrates drank the fatal hemlock.

Thus has Jesus demonstrated the divinity of His power, of His holiness and His love. But the eternity of His being and the changelessness of His character are more purely matters of revelation. They are to be told rather than seen. The disciples were able to be witnesses of His power, of His sinlessness and of His love. But they had no vision wherewith to behold Him afar back when as yet there was no star made, no archangel created, nothing in the void

possibilities of creation—only God and God alone; God in Christ and Christ in God, in the solitary glory and power and majesty of uncommunicated Deity. Hence they needed to be informed that Jesus Christ was not created, but was the same from everlasting to everlasting—the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

But we must distinguish clearly and carefully between Christ's personality and the things which men believe and teach concerning Him. The person of Christ is one thing, and the doctrines which pertain to Him are another thing. And these are not as well held apart in the minds of men as they ought to be. The doctrine is what you and I may think and believe; but the substance of truth lies behind and beyond that; and our doctrine is correct only in so far as it possesses and expresses the reality—just so far only as it corresponds with the substance. We may hold very erroneous opinions concerning Christ, but this does not really affect Christ himself. Just as men for ages entertained utterly false views of the solar system, making the sun in his majesty perform labors for the earth, which we now resent as unworthy to be named. Astronomers might teach what they would, might write it down in books, and draw it out upon charts: the church, with all her dignity and authority, might sustain the astronomers with ecclesiastical decretals, yet the truth itself, the sun in his central place and the planets about him remain unchanged.

So it is respecting Jesus Christ. Through a period of many centuries the doctrines which men have derived from the Bible, and stated in their own formulas, have fluctuated and varied. Schools have been built up on the different forms of statement (and some remain built to this day), so much so that one is almost compelled at times to enquire, "Is then Christ divided?" but let us not think, let not the world imagine, that therefore He Himself is changeable. We may talk about Him as we will, we may write about Him whatsoever, His immutability remains untouched. And this encourages us, or should, in the search after truth; for we know that we pursue no fleeing or evasive shadow, but an external substance that awaits our honest approach. . . . . I suppose there is no truth probably better understood or more widely appreciated than the changeful nature of all things terrestrial and human. It is a fountain of sentimentality into which everybody dips. The fledgling poet is almost sure to try his first flight in song upon some feature of the grand fact of change, as seen in the world. And it seems to me the subject has many times suffered a misfortune by such treatment. For the result has been to familiarize the mind with the sentiment without communicating what is ennobling and consoling in it.

Mere change is confusion, and there is nothing very beautiful or profitable in confusion. What would the waves of the sea be—were it possible to conceive it—without the everlasting deep beneath them?

What would the unfolding and falling, year after year, of the leaves upon the branches of the oak be without the old tree standing in its continued identity through successive years? If we will talk or write about the falling leaves, let us also not forget the trees that do not fall. Or if we sweep with our larger observation through wider circuits, and speak of the decadence of forests themselves, we are to mention then also the mountains which never fall, though a thousand generations of trees rise and fall upon their slopes. So through the entire sphere of mutable things we look for the unchangeable as a relief to thought and feeling.

Apply this principle to human events which men gather up by rehearsal into Chronicles, and call in the aggregate *History*. History is a record of changes. It rehearses revolutions. It speaks of that which was, but is not. It is a sea lashed into tumult, upon whose surface nations are like billows that rise and fall, and institutions are bubbles that flash and toss and collapse. The only absolutely permanent and unchanging fact in it is Christ.

(As on the material globe on which we dwell, its *axis* alone remains motionless! So in the globe of History, Christ, upon whom the whole revolves, remains *immutable*. Christ the *centre* of history; its *Sun!* its *explanation!* its *clue*. . . . . .)

The human soul naturally desires and seeks *perpetuity*. We are so constituted as to look for the permanent amid the transient. . . We seek perpetuity *without change*, in *Friendship;* in *Affection;* in *Hope;* in *Joy;* in *Life* (which is eternal existence).

Christ is the real object which all men are thus seeking.

Governments change; *Institutions* change; *popular sentiment* changes; *great* men change; *good* men change; *friends* change; *customs* change. . . . . .

What, then, we, as human beings, want in the midst of this universal fickleness and uncertainty, is something fixed and immutable. . . . . .

When we see how *characters* change under the pressure of various influences; how the child, that seems sweet and pure as the opening rose, grows sinful, developing into a corrupt youth and a vicious manhood; how men, who seemed strong in integrity, break down under temptations, and fall into ruin; how a few years of experience with the rough and selfish world converts our generous and true friend into a lump of selfish avarice, we hail with extreme delight a being whose character is subject to no such fluctuations. And this is Jesus Christ, and He the only such man that ever lived. With Him there was no apostacy, no backsliding, no conversion, no deviation from perfect and perpetual sinlessness.

So his *love* is an affection that does not, like the moon, wax and wane with circumstances through every degree, but like the sun burns on

continually, and pours down its light and heat forever. If there is anything which the human heart especially wants, and most earnestly craves, it is a love that knows no diminution, no variation. We can bear vicissitudes in the outside world; we can endure reverses of business, shocks, panics and somersaults in commerce, revolutions in politics, with comparative equanimity. These things touch most men in the outer circle of the soul. Their fortress of life is not yet taken, though these outposts may be carried. But when the tower of affection shakes and falls, the foundations of the great deep of life seem broken up and the cloudy windows of destruction opened upon us. And I wonder with such experiences, and impelled by such wants, where one now goes, thousands do not rush to Christ to shelter and console themselves in His love. Likewise in His ability and willingness to save there is no change.

And this is a wonderful and precious truth for the sinner. If salvation had been prepared, and when all things were ready, a certain hour, or day, or month or year had been appointed upon which mankind might accept the offers and be redeemed; and when the time had passed, all who had not availed themselves of the opportunity must remain without hope forever, there would be myriads who, too indifferent in sin, or too fond of their wicked ways, would have neglected the occasion to their eternal discomfiture. It might perhaps have been so. But it is not, thank God. You need salvation; you desire the forgiveness of your sins. Christ is just as ready to pardon now as eighteen centuries ago; for He remains the same from age to age.

(No *license* to continue in impenitence and sin to be derived from this argument. Though it remains the same, *you* do not. You are in a *hardening* process; a thousand *contingencies may* prevent you. . . . . .)

Christ was in the world only about thirty-three years—a mere flash and glimpse out of His eternal existence. Men saw the divine Apparition, and were glad that such a Being had condescended to visit the world. They beheld Him so wonderful in love, in tenderness, in mercy, in self-sacrifice, so mighty for good; and now they naturally desire to be assured whether this Being is to remain thus forever. The words of Scripture before us I think are abundant proof of this point. . . . . .

(He was the same in *building* the *worlds* when the starry walls of creation rose at His word, flashing up through space; the same as the *Angel* of *the Covenant* in the Jewish History; the same in *Bethlehem*, in *Cana*, in *Bethany*, in *Gethsemane*, on *Calvary* and *Olivet*, and His *throne* in *Heaven;* and the same who shall come again by-and-by to judge the world, and reign forever. Let all who believe in Him rejoice in this truth, and let all who are rejecting Him be filled with wholesome fear and saving alarm. . . . . .)

There is wonderful majesty in such a character as this. We may summon to our illustrations the sublimest things in nature, and they can only faintly figure to our comprehension the divine sublimity of this truth. Mt. Blanc, crowned with eternal snow, king of mountains, with no father before him, and no son after him to sit upon his throne, the same when Adam sinned, when Jesus died, when Freedom was born in America; or Niagara, pouring his exhaustless stream into the gulf of thunder, while human generations rise and vanish like the rainbows on his own shifting clouds of mist; or the Ocean rolling along its vast boundaries unchanged, while navies in successive ages rot and fall into his abysses, lost and forgotten—are all but feeble hints whereby we may endeavor to reach after the stupendous grandeur of that Being who is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever"—the same before the world, in the world and after the world. And what a glory ought it to be that such a character has condescended to stoop under the roof of stars and dwell a few years with men.

And now, my friends, it is in vain that I undertake to set forth before you something of this immutability of Christ, unless you are to make it of use to your spiritual good. I do not wish you to listen to this as though it were far-off thunder, which is not to bring a shower for your own individual field. Not one of you listening to me can possibly be indifferent, except you incur guilt by such indifference, to this truth. I care not whether you are a Christian or not a Christian, it is the same. There is an immense difference, permit me to say, between preaching a mere doctrine, truth or principle, and preaching a *person* —and especially such a person as Christ. If I were talking to you about electricity, or political economy, or a theory of moral government, you might sit and listen with the intellect or the ear of curiosity. But I am not preaching a doctrine, but a Personal Being, who sustains to you the relation of Saviour and Judge. I am trying to tell you of the Man who died to save us, who in the mystery of incarnation is God, and whom we are, every one, destined to see, as clearly as we now behold each other; from which determining interview there will be no escape and no excuse.

I am reminded that it is two years to-day since I first stood in this pulpit and spoke to you of the constraining love of this same Christ of whom I have spoken to-day. The time has been short; but there have come changes—changes in our personal affairs, changes in our church, changes in our social relations, changes in the community, and vast changes in our country and the world. But the Christ whose love I was then permitted to recommend to you is the same; the same in love, in mercy, in forbearance, in goodness, in power, and in justice, too. Some who hear me this morning have, in this period, come forward and taken from this Jesus the offered salvation. More of you have remained in your places as you were, without hope of eternal life, growing more unimpressible, and

preparing for I know not what spiritual destiny. Some of you who were Christians before have grown stronger in your faith in this immutable Saviour. Some of you have leaned upon His arm in the dark hour of affliction, have sought His shelter in the stormy trial, and have found Him true. You will cling to Him, I know, for you have found Him the same when all else seemed utterly changed.

Of this ministry I have to say that Jesus Christ is my gospel to you; He is all; I have sought to preach Him, how weakly and poorly I know with sorrow, and cannot bear to add your witness to my own consciousness. If I have sought to have you carry honesty, integrity, unselfishness and unworldly tempers into business, it is because I know this is Christ's wish concerning you; if I have urged a manly piety, a purity of heart and life, it is because I know that this is the unchanged will of Jesus Christ; if I have asserted the necessity of uprightness, candor, moral principle, Christian conscience, civil piety, and a religious patriotism in our political affairs, I do not think I have forgotten Christ at all, but have only remembered him in this sphere; if I have proclaimed love to man and all men—all absorbing love to mankind as the substance of the gospel on its human side—I have only repeated the words of our Lord and Master.

. . . . . .

I present the same Saviour to-day. I am *concerned* for some of you; I have no wish to *forecast* the future. Jesus Christ *immutable;* therefore, let the *righteous* rejoice; let the wicked take warning and repent. . . . . .

VII.

THE DIVINE ESTIMATE OF CHILDHOOD.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." *Matt. xviii:* 10.

This passage is part of a discourse, the text of which was a little child. Not some words out of a book, not some command of Moses, nor some prophecy of Isaiah, nor some maxim of the Talmud; but a real live text—a little boy two or three years old, whose mother, we may suppose, was watching the proceedings with maternal interest. You will perceive this by a simple reference to the scene as a historical fact. It was that day when the disciples came to Jesus with this selfish question of ambition: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They were confidently anticipating the Messianic dynasty. And seeing that in all the kingdoms they knew anything about, men were scrambling for places of power and honor, they imagined there would be something like this in the kingdom of heaven. They themselves were not without hope. Certainly some of the higher positions must be open to them; and one or two of their number could not fail to reach the very top. Who would this be? They were evidently misled in their notions by the political analogy. They did not perceive the true character of the kingdom of heaven.

Instead of arguing their question philosophically, our Lord called to Him a little child that happened to be near, and taking him up in His arms, where the whole group could see him, He said in reply to their question, that little children are the best type of the heavenly citizenship; and the more like this child any man became, the greater will he be in the new dynasty.

And, with so suggestive a text before him, our Lord proceeded to set forth certain other important truths connected with it.

We have had the same text here before us this morning (not individually the same, to be sure, but generically), and I wish to take the occasion to say a few things about children.

Let these little ones, that have just been publicly consecrated to the Lord, remind us of some practical truths. I am aware that, in His discourse, our Lord passes naturally from the child itself to the citizen in the new kingdom; and that he lays down certain principles, which are to govern in the Christian church. There is an intermingling of the literal and the figurative, the present and the future. But, at

the same time, the literal fact of childhood seems to hold its place throughout the entire discourse. So that we may understand the statement of this selected verse as applicable to children. What Jesus says here is an admonition to those who were listening, not to despise the little ones. And for the very striking reason, that their angels have direct access to the Heavenly Father.

1. The implication seems to be, that children are liable to be contemned or underestimated in importance, because of their littleness or feebleness. And in this respect, the world, then was not materially different from what it had always been, and indeed from what it is now.

Mankind have generally been valued for what they can accomplish in the line of secular forces. The general, at the head of his army, is considered greater than the martyr. Almost nobody but the angels noted the fact, when Paul passed from Asia over to Europe with the gospel of Jesus in his heart. But when Xerxes crossed the Hellespont and invaded Greece, the whole historic world was excited. And yet to-day we perceive that, with that obscure missionary, went a power which neither Persia nor Greece had ever dreamed of. But, then, Paul was only one little man, who could die for a faith, while Xerxes was a king followed by a million soldiers.

Our first estimates are made on sensuous scales. We weigh by avoirdupois before we do by the balances of thought and moral values. We are cheated by our senses into the notion that magnitude means worth. It is only by a revision of current ideas, by a deeper look into things, that we come to see that there never was a baby born in Egypt which was not really greater and of more consequence than all the pyramids ever built there. The pretty little Moses, crying among the flags of the Nile, was a mere trifle by the side of those stupendous piles of architecture ; but the infant trifle turned out to be immeasurably the greater.

The world makes wars, builds cities, railroads and ships, reaps harvest fields, crushes the gold out of the granite grip of the mountains.

And upon all this noisy and ponderous business (which is good enough as far as it goes,) the people set their thoughts and often too much of their affections. These things come to have an exaggerated importance. They expand before the disturbed imagination into illusory magnitudes. They appear to be greater than they really are, although the world does not think so, nor care to be told of it.

Now in such a terrestrial economy as this, little folks and feeble—that is, physically small and executively feeble—are hardly more than ciphers.

Everywhere the call is for men ; for women, too, of course, in their sphere—but always for adults.

Take up the catalogue of business enterprises, look it over, and

you will see that there is nothing in it for babies to do. And if they cannot *do* anything, what are they good for? What is their value? A ship is worth so many thousand dollars, and a steam engine so many; they have a known value. So have plows and reapers and trip-hammers. There is a price for horses and oxen. And there used to be, also, for able-bodied men and women; but that has rather gone out of custom now.

But what shall we say of children? How are we to weigh and measure them? They measure but little, and weigh less on our coarse scales. They are scarcely dust in the balances of the market. A daisy dropping off the load on the hay-scales makes no difference—the weigher does not miss it.

"Now," said Jesus, speaking in the face of such facts as these, "take heed, ye men, ye grown up and strong ones, do not make the mistake of despising one of these little ones;" and for what reason? "For I say unto you" (this gives it great emphasis), "for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

It is, therefore, for a heavenly reason, and not an earthly one. It is not a principle of commerce or social economy; but the simple fact that children are represented in heaven by their guardian angels.

2. There has been, and may still be, considerable difference of opinion upon this passage. But for myself it reads very much like the simple and direct statement of a fact. Without any subtle theorizing or philosophizing about it, the unprejudiced reader would take it, I think, as declaring the existence of patron angels. The obvious idea is, that these little ones have in heaven powerful friends who enjoy the immediate presence of God. In other words, there are angels who care for them and minister to them; and these angels are close to the throne of Supreme power.

If one were disposed to speculate, here is a fine occasion. With such a point before the mind, it is a thousand times easier to ask questions than to answer them. But I propose to do neither at present. This is a field beyond philosophy and science, belonging exclusively to revelation.

The Bible plainly enough teaches us to believe in the existence of angels. And this passage announces the fact that certain of these celestial beings are appointed to the ministry of human children.

And is not this precisely what we ought to expect from God's paternal nature?

3. It was because of this angelic ministry and superintendence, that adults were warned by our Lord not to despise or neglect these little ones.

It is very much as people under a monarchy sometimes speak: "Beware how you treat this person, or that, because he has friends at court!" To have friends at court is to be very fortunate; it is to be

never far away from royal sympathy and power. To have friends at court is to have the king's eyes and ears—and his sceptre, too, when required. Be careful of your manners toward those persons who are friends of the Lord Chamberlain or Prime Minister—His Majesty is always close at hand.

And this is the kind of consideration urged on behalf of the little ones. They have friends in high position at the court of heaven. Have a care how you treat them.

Here it is, then, my friends; our children, in their littleness and feebleness, are very dear to the heart of God. We make treasures of them in our parental fondness, cherishing them with our love, and throwing about them our most impregnable defenses. We would put about them, in danger, walls of fire, mounted with the artillery of the lightnings—and can God remain an idle spectator of their perils, especially since they are His more than they are ours? The Supreme Power of the universe is ready for their help and defense. Is it not so in our own homes? All the forces and resources of aid in the household are held in the special service of the baby; who always is the centre of the domestic citadel. Everything else will be taken before that.

And this truth of the Divine care through angelic ministries cannot fail to bring a sweet cup of comfort to all fathers and mothers, who are conscious of their own limited power and meagre resources. Where they must leave off, God can take it up, and do it infinitely better. On this ground it is that the Heavenly Father presents Himself to mankind, as in some special sense the God of the orphans. When the natural protectors of childhood have ceased from their efforts, when the father and mother are compelled to leave the tender child in the midst of the world's evils, then does the Almighty put his own arms about the fatherless; and woe to that man who dares to do them wrong! "It were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

4. But if any of you hesitate to accept this doctrine in its literal statement, preferring to rationalize, or to take it metaphorically, this does not substantially affect the question.

If you choose to think that there are not really such guardian angels appointed to this high office of ministering to the little ones, the essential truth remains, that children, which are such both in age and character, are peculiarly dear to God. You may interpret the passage figuratively, but, even then, it teaches that God has a special care for this feeble and little class. For myself, I can only take it as a literal fact; but, in either case, it reaches essentially the same result, viz., *God's high estimate of childhood.*

And this is a fact that flashes out like sunbeams all through the life of Christ. He will have no disparagement put upon infants. They are the types of the true population of His empire. And when

the disciples wish to monopolize His talk and presence, crowding back the mothers who yearn for a benediction upon their babes, and in their earnestness press inconveniently close to their Lord, He turns upon Peter and the rest, with undisguised indignation, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," put no obstacles in their way, and get out of their way yourselves, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And when these self-complacent adults are thinking comfortably about their own righteousness, and, therefore, their good heavenly prospects, he smites their religious air castles with this word of truth and power: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." He turns their theology upside down. While they are debating the questions of position, influence and honor, the emoluments and glories of the new kingdom coming, Jesus says to them, "Stop! look at that little child; you brush such away like flies when they annoy you or get in your way; but let me tell you, they are what you must become before you can get into my kingdom at all."

And what He said that day has never lost a particle of its truthfulness or power. Substantially it is just as applicable this moment as ever it was. "Take heed that ye slight not, neither undervalue, these little ones—their angels are looking this way."

5. But give attention to this, now, a little more closely, as it branches out into particulars.

We consider children of great value, in view of their future, in view of what they may become, considering their capacities and possibilities. The old Scripture expression, "A man-child," is significant. The possible manhood of the boy gives him dignity and worth.

That little creature lying there in your cradle, or nestling in your arms, rocking to and fro by the hour, sleeping, as if it were its special function, only waking to replenish its stomach, and roll around its listless eyes with no observation or speculation in them—what a puny, helpless, insignificant thing it is! An endless trouble and care, it imprisons the mother, adds to the work and anxiety of the family, and seems to fill the whole house with its presence. And where is the compensation? What is the value of the contents of that cradle? Your watch is taxed, and your horse is taxed, if you are fortunate enough to have one; but no assessor ever ventures to demand anything for the baby. Is it, then, good for nothing, because these sharp-eyed publicans discover no taxable value in it? Let us see.

What will you take for it, now, just as it lies there asleep—that little bundle of flannel in the cradle? "Take for it—did you say? Why, sir, fill that cradle with the purest of gold, and then count it out by itself: fill it again with the finest pearls from the necklaces of queens, and make a shining pile of them: then fill it once more with diamonds and rubies, and add them to the accumulated treas-

ures: these are great values, certainly, as the world estimates things, but they are no equivalent for my treasure in the cradle." You laugh the offer to scorn—as I know you would, if you were not too indignant to laugh at all—at the very idea of such a traffic as that. Why it is the *baby!* bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, life of your life; the planet holds not wealth enough to buy it.

This is true, to be sure, of your child and of mine. But consider that there are millions of just such which do not belong to us. What are we to say to them? What of children in general, somebody's or nobody's children—children as a definable class of the human population of the globe? It is the order of nature, that fathers and mothers put a supreme value upon their own offspring. This is to be expected, as a matter of instinct. But what of childhood itself?

We may apply to children the language that belongs, by inspiration, to sainthood, "It doth not yet appear what they shall be." Within that little soft hand, what undiscovered skill may lie concealed! What power of reason, of imagination, of memory, may there be, all unperceived, within that little drowsy brain! What force of will, what vehemence of passion, what sweetness of love, and what affluence of kindness and generosity, may all be wrapped up in that little human bundle!

Such was Moses, when the daughter of Pharaoh found him; such too, were Socrates, Shakespeare, Washington—yea, to behold the utmost significance of it, such was the Lord Jesus himself, lying in the manger at Bethlehem. They were all cheap-looking little things; but, tell me, have the mines and the farms, the forests and the pearly deep of the globe, all together, given the world any such wealth as humanity has received from these men?

A friend sends me, one day, a gift carefully concealed in its wrappings. I begin to pull them off, in a hurry, just as people do who receive presents; and after the outside is gone I come upon a handful of soil—as if some one had sent me a sample of a farm. Within it I discover some dry looking roots, and if I were to decide from the appearance, should be disposed to fling it into the street. But, turning it over, here is a splinter, and on it is written the word "Agave." Instantly the whole thing is transformed to my eye. I have an American Aloe—the Century Plant. And I say to myself, it looks hard, dry and unattractive now, but wait fifty or seventy years and you will see the stem shooting ten feet into the air, and crowned with a magnificent whorl of blossoms.

Fathers and mothers, such are the treasures that God gives us in our homes. And if he values them so highly as to appoint for them guardian angels, are we to do so foolish a thing as to under-estimate them, so wrong a thing as to despise or slight them? What is success, what is honor, what is wealth, after which the world is rushing with such blind impetuosity, when compared with these treasures of home?

And yet is it not a common mistake, a very common wrong, to neglect the highest care and culture of these little ones? You are very busy, yes, almost everybody is, in these days of trade and speculation. And especially busy are the men whose unfortunate lot is cast in a great city.

They have no time to look after their children. There is too much to be done in other directions. Hand them over to the nurse and schoolmaster. To be sure, there is the mother; but women are not generally idle. The demands of housekeeping, of society, of fashion, of fairs and festivals, and charity institutions, constitute about as much business as any lady can well manage. And, between the two, parental supervision and training of children fall too often into disuse. But let no mother think, let no busy father think, that anything of this sort, as a rule, can excuse them from those duties, tutorial and priestly, which God has imposed with the gift of offspring. Nor let any one reckon it a small and trivial business for a grown-up person. "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father." And do you, with whatever business on hand, venture to stretch yourself up to the height of those celestial guardians of childhood? There is no greater business than that of shaping human character.

6. But these children are not to be estimated by their own capacities and possibilities alone. They are to be measured also by their *relation to society*. They are society in germ. They are the future of communities, of cities, of states, of nations, of the entire race. They are the rulers, the law makers, the courts of justice, the churches and the armies. They are the "rising generation," bringing with them the new eras.

We who live in Chicago are apt to speak handsomely of its prosperity. But what do you consider the most important element to-day in this prosperity? I should name, as such, the education and training of the children of the city. And I would not quite like, either, to limit it to the children within the city limits. For as a matter of fact in all great cities in our land, the boys that are to be the men, come in from the rural neighborhoods. So that I would have the best of schools everywhere in the country, and as intelligent school committees as can be found; men who do not believe that money is worth more than boys. But here in town our public schools and our Sunday schools are doing the determining work of the future. You may point to the system of railroads centering here, and bringing in the traffic of two continents; to the navigation of the lakes; to the vast and fertile farms of the northwest, and to the mines of the mountains, and do it proudly and gratefully.

And these are, indeed, all valuable—not to be despised by any means; but everything, after all, depends upon the men who handle them, upon their character, their motives and purposes. Let avaricious,

dishonest, selfish, mean men become the managers of this immense business, and your city is cursed in the eyes of God and mankind. Less wealth, and rightly used, will make a vastly greater city.

And what these men of the future will be, is now being determined in our schools, and homes, and streets. It is the question of the boys and girls. What are we doing with them, or not doing? This is the vital question for us. Look, therefore, to the children. They are small to be sure, they are feeble in the midst of the forces of society, but with them comes destiny. How little a thing is the rudder of a ship compared with the vessel itself. The massive structure ready to be launched, a thousand men could not lift it. The mighty forces of wind and of steam are required to propel it across the waves. But down there, just under the surface of the water, is a small plank, that defeats the side-long gale, and overcomes the treacherous currents of the sea, steering the vessel right on to its appointed harbor.

Childhood is the rudder by which the world is steered. But there is still one aspect of this subject, too commonly overlooked, to which, therefore, I desire especially to direct your thoughts. And this is the *mission of childhood in the education of adults.*

Children after all are the real school-masters of the world, when you think of the highest and most essential instruction that mankind receive. Not only has God "perfected praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," but he has completed human culture in the same way.

We commonly think that we are instructing and drilling the little folks, when in reality they are performing this duty for us in the most important respects. We teach them grammar, arithmetic, business and manners. We educate them in the arts and sciences, in the practical affairs of business life.

And if this education is carried up, as it ought be, so as to include the moral and religious capacities of the child, we tell them about right and wrong, about truth and falsehood, about God and the soul's highest wants. The Sunday school thus supplements the public school and the college, and too often is left to supplement, in its imperfect way, the defective training of the fireside.

But this business of teaching children is more *reciprocally instructive* than we may have imagined. Is it not the mission of the child to teach its father and mother the essential doctrines of self-denial and sacrifice for the good of others in the most effective style? In the whole round of your life, what is the most potent influence exerted upon you? Is it not that of your children? You toil for them, you think for them, you forego pleasures for them, you give up rest and recreation for them—finding what you seem to lose in a vicarious love. A bachelor may care for himself, and a maiden may care for herself, if she does not care for him. But fathers and mothers care

for their children. I know of nothing that can extract the roots of selfishness from the heart like a baby. There is a woman who is selfish by nature. She was selfish as a child toward her parents; selfish toward her brothers and sisters, toward her school-mates and playmates; selfish as a young lady in society; selfish even in her courtship (for such a thing is possible); and finally a selfish wife. But now the baby is born, and you look in vain for that selfish woman. In her place you find a mother forgetting herself in watchings and labors, in denials of her own inclinations, enduring hardships, seclusion from society, and manifold inconveniences—and all without a pout or a murmur.

Who taught her that beautiful and beautifying art of life? She never found a teacher that could do what that babe did for her.

You come in here, and sometimes hear a sermon about selfishness, and then very likely you go out again and forget it—at least to practice it. But when your child is the minister, day and night, year by year, in helplessness and sickness, you begin to treasure up the teaching "in good and honest hearts." Nobody can teach this fundamental doctrine of self-denial as children do.

The school-masters of business and politics are forever teaching men to be selfishly ambitious. Many learn the bad lesson so well as to be eternally undone by it. And he is a very remarkable man who can sit all day within the sound of such instruction, and not imbibe a little of it, even unconsciously.

But when the father returns home at evening from the turmoils of business, do not the little ones, greeting him at the door, and through the hall, and hanging upon him with glad welcomes all the way up stairs, tenacious in grasp with their little hands, and profuse of kisses with their rosy mouths, remind him, as though God were speaking directly out of heaven, that there are other and greater treasures than those of property. How soon would every noble, generous and fine quality perish in the heart, if men could not go home after the business of the day to breathe the purer and sweeter atmosphere of the family, and think of humanity as children compel us to think of it.

Children thus are continually teaching us the essential and characteristic elements of the kingdom of heaven. It is a notable fact in the Christian system, that childhood is set forth as the type of character to be attained. As if every year that an adult lives without being a Christian, he is living still further away from the true manhood. All these wrong steps must be retraced. The old man, hoary in sin, must go back to childhood to find the right road to heaven. So that the little child, in the center of the family circle, in the midst of society, is always a living sermon on the nature of the Divine Kingdom. "Except ye become as a little child ye shall in *no wise* enter in."

And what are the distinctive characteristics of the citizen in this kingdom? They are faith and love, in simplicity of heart. Under what teacher will you place yourself to acquire a knowledge of these things? The theologian, with all his profound erudition, cannot give you an understanding of them. There are books enough written upon these topics; but you will do better than I have been able to do, if you come to a knowledge of faith through philosophical treatises.

But now learn a lesson from your child. You must become as a little child in order to enter the kingdom at all; let this teacher, ordained of God, instruct you in the momentous duty of *trusting* in your Heavenly Father. Your child has implicit confidence in you; you know it, you see it, you feel it. Go, then, and exercise the same confidence in your Father which is in Heaven.

Never mind, for the moment, the theological definitions and metaphysical distinctions. "Have faith in God," as your children have in you. Love God as they love you—tenderly, ardently, reverently. Love your fellow-men, as these little ones love brother and sister—disinterestedly, whole-heartedly, "*without dissimulation.*"

And these little ones teach another grand truth, which the adult world is always forgetting, viz.: that strength should serve weakness, that wisdom should instruct ignorance, that greatness should minister to littleness. Where else will you find such instruction given? The theory of the world is altogether different. Kings, heroes and mighty men, in all ages, have taught and practiced the reverse of this Christian doctrine. They have devoured the feeble and small; they have trampled upon them as wrestlers trample upon the dust of the arena; they have built them into their own walls of glory and power. You must enter some other school if you will learn this Divine philosophy of life.

At the fireside your teacher waits for you. Whatever you may do on the market, in the court-room, in the political caucus, in the military camp—when you go home, strong as you are, great as you may be, you will bow yourself down to the service of your child. And you may learn there what all the world beside has never so much as hinted to you.

And so I thank God for this Gospel of Infancy. I am glad to have it abroad in society, preaching the everlasting truths of Christ. Listen to its discourses. Despise not these little ones, for their own sakes, as well as for the sake of their angels in Heaven. You do well also, I think, to consecrate them unto the Lord, as some of you have been doing here this morning. I would have you do it, not because it has been the general practice of the Church, not because it is taught in our theology and embodied in our creeds; but because of its divine fitness. I would have you do it, not because of some positive divine command, for there is none; but on the higher

ground of a gracious privilege, which the love of God for you and your offspring grants you; a privilege that involves too much to be despised and neglected. And we who are reminded again to-day of the little ones whom God has taken out of our arms, and away from our homes, may take comfort from every word Jesus has uttered about little children. Heaven is richer by our losses. They have gone to their angels, which "do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven."

VIII.

LAST EDITION OF THE DIVINE LAWS.

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." *Hebrews* x. 16.

That of which I am now to speak concerns the transcription of God's laws into the minds and hearts of mankind. The process by which this is to be done, and the results of doing it, are matters of consequence. The fact that there are divine laws will not be debated. Nor will it be doubted that these laws have much to do with the development and welfare of humanity.

No human being takes a step in this world, without coming in contact with what we call "law." The farther one goes in any direction, the higher and deeper he goes, the vaster and more complex does this fact become. There are laws for the body and laws for the mind, laws of intellect and laws of emotion, laws of sense and laws of spirit.

The universe is a book of immensity, in which the Divine Statutes are inscribed. That which looks to you like a drop of light upon the sky of night, and which the astronomer calls Saturn or Jupiter, is a globe of facts codified by the thought of God. The hazy glory of that nebulous belt, called the Milky Way, is full of laws; so is the cobweb in the grass under your feet; and so is the dust that the gust of the whirlwind sprinkles through the air and dashes into your eyes.

Whether you wake or sleep, whether you dine or fast, whether you are a worker or an idler, whether you speak the truth or tell a lie, whether you cheat your neighbor or deal fairly with him, whether you are learned or ignorant, makes no matter, so far as this one fact is concerned, you are inevitably under law of some kind.

Sometimes, in our technical religious language, the Law and the Gospel are spoken of, as if each excluded the other. And in a certain sense they do. For that special system, under which the Jews received their national training, was essentially and distinctively a system of legal enactments. And in the New Testament modes of statement it is called the Law, in distinction from the Gospel. But there are laws in the Gospel and gospels in the Law.

He who forsakes Moses for the Christ, does not thereby escape

from the dominion of law. There are laws in the scheme of Faith, as well as in the scheme of Works. And because in the new order of things, under the Christian system, men are saved gratuitously, they are not therefore saved lawlessly.

When, therefore, God issues to mankind certain specific laws, in some legislative kind of way, as He did, for example, on Mount Sinai, the procedure is not to be taken as something unparalleled. Every mountain on earth, every star in the heavens, and every vanishing cloud that floats between them, is a Mount Sinai. When Kepler found his three great laws, and wrote them in human speech ; or when Newton discovered his one supreme law of gravitation, and stated that in words ; what was it, but God speaking to men in terms of law?

As we understand it, all law implies a will ; and the laws of the universe are God's will, however expressed ; so that the laws in the Bible and the laws in the body and the mind of man, are both sacred and from the same source. He who transgresses the statutes in his own nature sins against God as truly as he who worships an idol—not a sin of precisely the same character, but still a sin. In such a divine economy, now, we find ourselves ; and every sensible person will be sure to ask the ultimate meaning of it.

Look, then, for a moment, at the functions of law in the moral training of mankind. Its first operation seems to be in the way of *limitation.* The earliest statutes are prohibitory. Before ignorance is superseded by knowledge, in the era of inexperience, men are commanded to abstain. Before people have learned to govern themselves, they require the checks and restraints of inhibition. He who has the disposition to steal must be authoritatively commanded, "Thou shalt *not* steal." Such an one is a dangerous animal : and the public safety requires that he be fenced in by a statute.

This is a sample of all primitive legislation. Such, for example, as you employ in the training of your children. At the very outset you erect barriers for them on the brinks of perils. You put your prohibition on certain things. There is the fire, and you say, "My child, keep your fingers out of the flame, keep yourself out of the fire." Here is water, and in its depths there is danger ; and you say again, "Child, do not fall into the water." There is height, and to tumble from it involves harm ; and so you say, "Child, do not fall." And thus you are constantly putting checks and restraints around your children, for reasons known to yourself, although not to them. You do not command them to eat, drink and sleep ; for nature takes care of these things. But you begin to get them under way, amid the perils of life, by these simple and essential prohibitions.

In this manner law comes, first, into the control of outward action. It regulates external conduct, and does it in the way of restraint, by the use of some kind of outside government. But conduct is an effect,

rather than a cause ; and as such, is best treated through its causes. Hence the law, in order to fulfill its real design, must extend its control back into the desires, dispositions and volitions. In other words, beginning with the external, it must pass thence into the interior life. And in proportion as mankind progress in the right kind of development, this process of transferring laws from statute books into wills, desires and moral states, goes forward. This is what you see taking place in all genuine civilization.

As a matter of fact, historically, God began His culture of humanity with a very brief and definite command. It was a simple prohibition. Of the fruit of a certain tree the man and the woman were not to eat. This was made the pivot upon which everything turned.

What other laws He may have issued to the race, between this initial point and the elaborate legislation, many centuries afterward, for the management of a select nation, is not known. But in the time of Moses, and through him as the agent, God put forth a legal system, that was designed to train that people, and through them, in a measure, the whole human family. Nothing more systematic, more elaborate, or so perfectly adapted to the work of training a nation, was ever devised. No citizen could for a day, escape from its sway. Every man and woman felt the presence of the Lawgiver in the operation of the law.

The Mosaic Code became the school and the schoolmaster of the nation. Parents must understand it, and teach it diligently to their children. They had no difficulty with any question about the Bible in their public schools, for they had but one Book ; and this one Book was the law, and the literature of the nation. To be sure, the Mosaic system was not the final system of God with men. It was a divine scheme of education. The very term law in Hebrew signifies instruction.

And so, a series of prohibitions was announced, in the most authoritative style. Forth from the smoking and quaking mountain thundered the voice of God, "Thou shalt *not.*" A system of sacrifices, also, was instituted, and prescribed religious rites, which were designed to train the nation into loyalty to Jehovah, upon the one side, and into fidelity to righteousness, on the other. Doubtless this sacrificial system had also an ultimate reference to the mission of the Messiah. By means of it, the people were trained into forms of thought that became the vehicle for the reception of the idea of the distinctive work of Christ.

But the immediate purpose was habitual opposition to idolatry and immorality. And this, at first, chiefly as a matter of external conduct. The nation was commanded to allow no other gods, besides the One revealing himself thus and there ; to make no images for the purpose of worship ; and to abstain from certain forms of misbehavior.

Now, it is impossible that a nation, under such a strictly legal management, should remain stationary morally. One of two things must inevitably take place. Either these laws must become a dead

letter—fossils of the statute books—or they must gradually pass into the life and character of the people. Those who are familiar with Jewish history are aware how very remarkably the Mosaic system entered into the structure of the national mind and heart. To the Hebrew, the Law and the Prophets were everything. Their decision, in all matters referred to them, was final. Even Jesus, with His new radical gospel, said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." And so, as generations have been coming and departing, the legislation of Sinai has passed, more and more, into the life of mankind. Moses never had so vast an audience as now. His institutes never had so many faithful adherents. The ancient nation, to be sure, is dispersed; but this very dispersion is God's husbandman, scattering abroad the seed of divine legislation through the world.

Those old stone tablets, that played so conspicuous a part in the dramatic scenes of Sinai, that Moses made, and that God wrote upon with His own hand, have long since disappeared. They were, for ages, among the sacred treasures of the nation. But they are forever gone, in all probability. There is just a possibility, that, somewhere among the unexplored ruins of Asia, they may be found; although there is no likelihood of it. But the inscriptions upon them are not gone. These were indestructible. And they have been transcribed into the ideas, customs and institutions of the civilized world. Some of our modes of thought here to-night; many of our social and domestic customs; and not a few of our institutions, exhibit the moulding influences of those ancient inscriptions.

In this manner we come to a better conception of what is meant by writing the Divine Laws *in* the human mind. Inscribing them upon stone or parchment, or printing them with ink on modern paper, is not the end—but only the beginning.

Nor is it sufficient to lay up the text of these statutes in the cyclopedia of memory. Most of us have better things in our memories than in our dispositions and traits of character. He who practices all the good precepts he can repeat from recollection, is certainly well on toward sainthood. But what mankind especially requires is to have these divine commands pass into the very blood and nerve fibre of our nature. This is the way to improve the quality of our humanity.

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, grand as they are as national documents, are a thousand-fold grander as reproduced in the habits and character of the American people, and embodied in our distinctive institutions. Indeed, this is the very problem of the nation—to write these principles in the minds, and put them into the hearts of the people. And until this is accomplished, we cannot consider our government securely established, or our institutions permanent. For these documents, labeled and laid up in the National archives, may come to be little more than curiosities of legislative literature.

A man may hang the Decalogue upon the walls of his home, and still be an idolater—even as many a one has the Lord's Prayer, for an ornament, on the walls of his chamber, who yet forgets to pray, both at evening and morning. The thing to be done is to hang the Decalogue on the inner walls of the heart.

Among the Jews existed a custom of wearing phylacteries—parchment, with Scripture written upon it, wrapped up in due form, and bound upon the forehead or the arm—and for a show of religion these were often made uncommonly broad. It was all to indicate veneration for the Word of God—for His laws and precepts. But making broad the phylacteries, and wearing ostentatiously the law upon the forehead, was quite possible, while yet none of this law was in the heart and in the character of the sanctimonious wearer.

Suppose the Japanese, after investigating the Bible as the book of western civilization, find it so superior to anything that can be found in their libraries, that they decide to adopt it for themselves. The Mikado sends it forth to the Empire with his decree. It goes into all the libraries, public and private—becomes the favorite reading of the nation. This would be considered a great achievement by the friends of the Bible. But the chief task would yet remain—to put this book into the ideas, customs, character, and life of that people. And this implies an immense revolution. It is not the work of a day, nor the immediate result of any imperial decree. It means a radical change in theology, in moral standards, in social customs, domestic habits, and public institutions. It means a change in the current of national thought and feeling.

Among the Anglo-Saxon people this has been going on for ages—ever since the Bible, carried forth from the gates of Rome, began its transforming work among the northern barbarians.

You and I may live in a community where the laws of truthfulness, of justice, of purity, of kindness, are recognized. They may be found substantially in existing statutes, known as "the laws of the land." They may even serve the purpose of restraint upon external conduct. But the ultimate design of them is the transcription in character. It is intended that men and women shall become truthful, just, kind, and pure in heart. And this is one of the functions of law—to transfer itself, thus, into character. There are those, however, who seem to think nothing necessary but legislation. Only pass the law; get it once into the statute book, and the victory is won. Not yet. We do well to understand that laws have no power to perform miracles. A good law is an excellent thing; but it does not possess the quality of omnipotence.

In some such way, then, as I have now indicated, is it that the sin, or moral evil, of social and individual life, is to be eradicated. I mean, of course, so far as laws can have anything to do with it. And significantly, therefore, in the Scripture discussion, the Lord proceeds

to say, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." He does not say, you perceive, that He will *forget* the sins of mankind as soon as He has given them good laws; but only when these laws have been written in their minds, and put into their hearts. In other words, these iniquities pass out of Divine recollection when they pass out of existence.

The principal involved in this theme sheds some light upon certain questions among us of most practical import. There are great wrongs existing in society, which all good people desire to see removed. The chief difficulty shows itself in the practical handling of them. How shall they be removed or eradicated?

The professional reformers have a routine method of doing the work. Beginning with discussion, they carry it on through agitation, in all its degrees, through concerted action, organization, party and legislation. And I do not deny the right, nor, in some sense the philosophy of this method. But there is apt to go with all this the fallacy that, when legislation has been once reached, the goal is touched and the victory won.

It is a sufficient refutation of this fallacy, to point to the stranded wrecks of once gallant legislations all over the world. There are laws in this country, regularly enacted and put into the statute books, with appropriate penalties attached, against the mean and vulgar vice of *profanity*. They are the echo of the original voice on Sinai, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." But has any living man, thirty years of age, ever seen this law enforced? And why not? Because of public opinion. Is it not, however, a law? Yes, for it has never been repealed. And is not profanity as truly an evil now as in any preceding age? Indeed I think it is more intensely evil now than in any former period of human history, because the nature of that Divine Being, whose name is thus blasphemed, is more fully understood in our day than ever before. But that upon which such a law can be based, is reverence for God. And this veneration is not so thoroughly infused into the popular heart, as to produce the necessary public sentiment, to sustain the execution of such a law.

There is a certain amount and kind of public sentiment respecting this, to be sure, for swearing is generally expelled from good society. It is reckoned essentially a vulgar, an ill-bred vice. It must not show itself in the presence of ladies. It must keep out of the parlor. Public opinion drives it out of doors; that is, out of fine doors, into the streets and low places. But to give the law force enough to reach execution, if it ought to be executed, it becomes necessary to inculcate true religious veneration.

Another great evil—one of the very greatest—is intemperance in the use of intoxicants. Various methods have been devised, and, to a certain extent, employed, in the efforts to suppress this immense

vice. In these later day the most popular and prevalent method is that of legislation; and laws, of greater or less stringency, are proposed and enacted.

In Illinois, for example, we have now such a law recently passed, to go into operation on the first of July. This law is undoubtedly excellent. At least I think it is. It seems to me to embody good sense, and practical methods of dealing with the vice of drunkenness. I know of none more likely to accomplish the object. To be sure, its enemies rail against it, which is to be taken as excellent testimony in its favor. They call it "tyrannical," "unjust;" declare it to be "bad in spirit," and "pernicious in its results." They try to prove that it is likely to make "hypocrites," and "multiply tipplers;" at which latter result they, of course, ought to feel exceedingly alarmed: for if it should thus turn out, what would become of the business?

But, at any rate, every possible effort will be made, undoubtedly, to repeal this law. It will go into the caucuses, be the main question in the ward meetings, determine candidates. On election days votes will try to snow it under. And failing in this, as we expect, everything possible will be attempted, in order to kill it. Judges and magistrates will be approached with all manner of influence to prevent the execution of the statute. It behooves, therefore, every friend of virtue and good order in society, to stand steadfastly and resolutely by this law.

But what, after all, is the real ground of our hope? It is that Temperance, as a fundamental law of our human nature, be written in the mind and heart of every man, woman and child. Legislation will help us; but it cannot cure the evil. We must appreciate the vital importance of self control. We are to be temperate in every direction—not simply in the matter of intoxicating beverages. And though you enact the best temperance laws conceivable; though your legislation, regulating or controlling the traffic, be all that could be desired; still, unless the people are systematically and thoroughly educated into the mastery of their appetites, these laws will not avail. If you could by legislation annihilate alcohol, there would remain, to take its place, opium and hasheesh. In a word, the grand law of temperance, or self-government, must be written in the mind, and put into the heart of the people.

The same thing may be said of the legislation designed to secure a proper observance of our Christian Sunday. There can be no doubt that such a day of rest from physical labor, a day especially devoted to the uses of religion, is one of the greatest of God's blessings. It was deemed of sufficient importance to receive special mention in the legislation of Sinai: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." And Christian nations have had such an appreciation of this institution, as involving the rights and interests of mankind, that they have enacted laws for its protection. This, too, is one of

the elements of contention between old Europe and new America, on the common ground of the United States. That the desecration of this sacred day must prove an irreparable loss to any people seems plain enough. And that, therefore, the people have a right to hedge the day about with legislative checks and restraints to overwhelming invasion, would appear to be a sensible opinion. But all such laws can prove only a temporary obstruction to the swelling flood of opposition, unless they pass over from the statute book into character and conduct.

If, by training men to abstain from work not only, but from rowdyism as well, one day in seven, those men can be settled gradually into habits of respectful order and peace when their hands are not full of labor, the law will be a successful schoolmaster. And if, going on from this chapter in the lessons to the next, the people can have their thoughts directed upward, and their feelings lifted heavenward, the process of education by Sunday laws will justify itself. But simply to enact the laws, and then suppose the work accomplished, is a piece of sheer folly.

Make your laws, and then educate, educate! *educate!* Let the pulpit perform its true functions, which is not a stereotyped weekly exhortation unto repentance and faith, but a broad and progressive work of education or edification. It is its business to teach the methods, and persuade to the practice, of building up manhood in all the breadth of human nature. Let the Press, one of the mightiest of modern agencies, use its vast powers, and grand opportunities, to teach the people the principles and laws that should regulate human conduct. Yes, let every man, and woman, too, or child, even, who can speak or write, and get a hearing, join in this good work. And especially does all this apply to the teaching and training of the young. If the work is ever to be accomplished, it must be begun and more than half finished in childhood.

No nation on the face of the earth needs this theory of education so much as ours; because here the people make the laws and repeal them. A King or Mikado may be wiser and better than his subjects, and legislate for them. He has the power to retain his statutes and enforce them. But a free people, such as we are, stand always exposed to the temptation to play with legislation, as boys play with armor. We need to cultivate a veneration for law.

Such a view then of the function and the purpose of law, as related to character and life, must certainly increase our respect for it. It is not a thing to be dodged. It is not something to be evaded as far as possible, and submitted to where evasion becomes impossible. Righteous laws are God's school-masters, and are to be respected as such. They are to be accepted as the means of a higher education. When transcribed as they are designed to be, and finally edited, they mean a purified and ennobled humanity, better society, more beneficent

institutions and habits of self-government. And especially true is all this of those divine laws, which apply to our moral and religious nature. For these there are no prisons, no courts of judgment, no police force, such as compel men to respect civil legislation. And so they the more readily fall into disuse, become a dead letter, where they are not taken into the mind and heart of those who ought to become subject to them.

Who can estimate what the Bible is doing to-day for the human race? Look at its work among the opinions, customs and institutions of the world. But how much grander will it appear when incarnated in characters and lives! As it is with the sun, glorious in the heavens, as it pours its affluent splendor all adown the skies, you only begin to understand its real glory and power when you see its beams reappearing in grass-blade and leaf, in rose and magnolia blossom, in the vitality of animals and man, in the whole vegetable and animal life of the planet. This is the sun—not that orb of fire, suspended in the blazing dome of the summer noon. And so is this resplendent Book of God yet to be reproduced, as he designs, in our glorified humanity.

In this direction lies liberty. Men are not to be made free by repealing statutes, but by rising above them into a higher life; not by throwing the codes into the fire, but by assimilating their principles. This process is very palpably transpiring among us now. We have already passed beyond the reach of some legal enactments. There are laws against stealing; but what do you care for them? The law of honesty, to this extent at least, is written in your mind and breast. There are laws against perjury and highway robbery; and if these statutes should to-morrow, by the legislative power of the State, be made a hundred-fold more stringent, it would be nothing to you, for you have been educated into the virtues which prevent these crimes. And to this extent you have passed from bondage into liberty—the freedom of virtue. Thus it is that he is the freeman whom Christ makes free by the inner life.

I read at the beginning of this service the following passage: "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance." And what does the apostle say about them? "Against such there is *no law*." They who possess these qualities are lifted into the true liberty. Not that all statutes are to be abolished; but he who has the law written in his heart, obeys freely, and not through compulsion. The letter of the statute to him is nothing; for his very character determines all the results that the law itself could reach.

This, then, friends, is what I mean by the final edition of the divine laws. This is what God intends by His legislation. Toward this mankind are being educated and trained. A life that is regulated by an internal law, and a character against which there is no exterior legislation—this is the completed manhood.

IX.

A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

Rev. vii : 9-17.

NOTE.—The following sermon, which will be found quite fragmentary in its character, is inserted as a specimen of the way in which Mr. Helmer usually prepared his discourses, more especially during the latter years of his ministry. Its incompleteness must be filled out by the reader, so far as it may be, under the guidance of its suggestive sentences and leading words.

We are to take this passage, I suppose, as a partial picture of Heaven. It is a glimpse, as if one caught a momentary view through a door that opened and then suddenly closed again. Just such glimpses as we secure sometimes in traveling in the modern style ; a glance at an exquisite landscape, that in another instant disappears behind an intervening hill, or such a vanishing vision as we occasionally have on the street, when the outer door opens to let some one in, and our eye catches a glimpse of the interior of a beautiful home. Something like this, I imagine, was John's vision given in this passage. It was not the whole of Heaven, not all the apartments in the celestial palace, only a bit of a landscape that belongs to an entire continent of the most enchanting scenery.

He saw just for a moment the splendid throne and the mysterious Lamb, and the radiant multitudes ; had just time enough to notice that their garments were snowy white, and that they bore in their hands palm branches, in token of some victory ; and while he looked with gaze intent, there fell on his ears words of sublime adoration, and then in an interval of silence, a question was propounded to him by one of the elders, and immediately answered by the same.

This answer only expands and prolongs the celestial vision. . . I choose this apocalyptic vision for the purpose of making some remarks on Heaven and the way into it.

. . . . . .

The book of Revelation, from which this extract is taken, is one of difficult interpretation.

It is understood to be a disclosure of future events connected with the Christian Church. This, no doubt, is its fundamental idea and purpose.

The Church was like a ship launched on an *untried* sea ; no one had ever navigated it. . . . There were to be storms and

dangers : the Commander was in Heaven ; He gave them some tokens to cheer them, and to assure them of final entrance into the celestial harbor. . . . . .

In the progress of disclosure from time to time, Heaven itself flashes on the view, as during a fearful storm the sun bursts forth with mighty blaze and glorious splendor, to cheer and warm the mariner.

And so it happens that we have in this book of Revelation, earthly events and celestial scenes blended together.

There is no book in the Bible in which heaven and earth are brought so close together, as this.

Just as it ought to be. For this book is the telescope, with lens of prophet's eye, through which looking, we behold the new heavens and new earth, that we imagine the final Paradise of humanity.

But it is a book of pictures. It is a work not *of* the imagination, but *for* it. It is symbolical in its structure and style, and he who goes into it with his carpenter's square and multiplication table, will make nothing out of it but nonsense and bedlam.

It is a book of dreary splendor, to those who insist on absolute literalness and matter of fact.

But if you will understand it to be pictorial, and intended to be only general and vague, giving hints enough for comfort and courage, but not the full data with which to construct a complete picture of heaven, you may dream amid its gorgeous scenery and awake refreshed in spirit. . . . And precisely on this account I should go to the apocalypse for my conception of heaven. For I suppose heaven to be so glorious, beyond the highest conceptions of the human mind, that it is most truthfully spoken of when set in terms that only the imagination can interpret.

But we ought to be careful to say, that when we have done our utmost either to conceive or express what we can of heaven, it will be no more like the real Paradise than Church's Heart of the Andes is like the whole belt of tropical scenery. . . . . .

That there is a heaven is now generally believed by people who read the Bible, and by many, perhaps, who never read it.

There is no special difficulty in the way of such a belief.

It is a very pleasant thing to believe. It is a cheering, comforting, stimulating idea. There are multitudes of heavy-hearted people who would not let this beautiful object go out of their grasp of faith, for the whole world.

It is the south window in their home of life, that lets in the warm beams of the winter sun. All the hyacinths and geraniums of their hopes blossom in that window. . . . . .

But a still more generic and fundamental belief is, in a future existence of the human soul. You may never hear this question discussed in our time ; but there was a day when it was one of the vital problems under debate.

There have been ages when men were in an agony of uncertainty whether the grave was not the end of all things. "If a man die shall he live again?" not precisely in the sense that Job had of it, but as reaching forth into the other-world future, has often been asked.

It has been disputed, too, whether the Hebrew nation had the idea of a future, but there can be really no doubt of that, I think. The fact is the human mind instinctively clings to this doctrine, under all circumstances and in every condition. The disbelief of it is forcibly repelled by the whole energy of our higher nature. Better than all logic, more reliable than all analogy, is the evidence of our own spiritual instinct.

Now the Jews had this in common with other nations, and they had besides this, special Divine communications that would not have left them, we should say, in suspense. But, at the same time, the doctrine of a future life held not a conspicuous place in Judaism. As a doctrine in the old Testament it is simply assumed; no special importance seems to be attached to it; none of the motives of life are drawn from it as with us. . . . . .

The language in the two testaments on this subject is strikingly *unlike*. . . . In the old testament, do *this and live*, or do *that* and *die*. . . . *Wisdom* and *piety*—inherit *prosperity*. In the new Testament, "*believe* and you shall be *saved*." "In my Father's house are *many mansions*." "Where I am, there shall ye be also." . . . . . .

The ancient world, thus, was under the oppressive fact and consciousness of *death*. To die was to descend to Hades, to go into the lower parts of the earth, to pass out of light into darkness, to go from the noise of the earth to the silence of the grave. No doubt the majority of mankind have always believed in such an under-world, the abode of human spirits after death. And yet in all the dreary ages no one out of the departed millions came back to make any report of what was particularly going on there. Friends tenderly loved were continually departing, but not a word of any message came back from the tantalizing silence. . . . . .

Poets indulged the fancy of a descent to Hades, and gave large freedom to their imaginations in depicting scenes and events down there; but it has only the license of poetry. Angels indeed, according to the Hebrews' Scriptures, appeared and disappeared in their earthly ministrations; but whoever knew anything about the angelic nature? or ever learned any secrets from them about that other world? They always came on missions pertaining to this earthly life. And when Moses and Elijah returned, on the mount of transfiguration, visibly present before the eyes of some of their own countrymen, there was not so much as a whisper about celestial things, although they talked long about the coming events of Calvary.

Paul, too, says he knew a man that was caught up into Paradise,

and heard unspeakable words, but it was unlawful to utter them ; and right there he dropped the exciting topic. . . . Persons that were dead have come to life again ; the man who touched the prophet's bones in the sepulchre of Elisha ; the young man of Nain ; Lazarus, and how many more? but not one among them divulges any secrets. . . . Had they any to divulge? . . .

In the light of these facts consider the alleged communications from the spirit world by the Modern Spiritists. . . . .

Now one of the elements in the terrors of death that so ruled all the Ante-Christian world, and have far too vast an empire still, is this very reticence of those who might speak, this strange and oppressive *silence* of the tomb. Up to the Advent of the Son of God, the world lay groaning and trembling under these terrors.

Mankind were in bondage to the fear of death. There was no light in the sepulchre, and only a faint dimness beyond.

And I suppose this was according to the Divine intention.

It was designed that men should receive a strong and vivid impression of the consequences of sin in the form of death. For four thousand years they shuddered in the gloom and horror. The future state was not illuminated, as it has been since by Divine Revelation ; the world was shut up with the mystery of death, and compelled to appreciate its terrors. . . . . .

It was intended that Christ should be, not only the Sun of righteousness, but also the Sun of the future life, illuminating the world beyond this, that had lain so long in the shadows of night. He it was who "*abolished* death." Mark the force of the language, *abolished* death, and brought "*life* and *immortality* to light." . . .

I do not say that Christ first taught the immortality of the soul—it is *assumed* all through the Old Testament. . . . The best men cheered themselves by it ; but he gave it the *day-light*. . .

He did not suspend the reign of death, . . but *removed* its *terrors* by showing the meaning and mission of it.

Our Lord taught the doctrine of a future life more clearly and fully than it had ever been taught in any age or among any people. He came down from heaven and could, therefore, speak from observation and experience, or positive knowledge. And to-day our belief and knowledge of the destiny of mankind in the other world must rest on his communications. It is from him that John received those disclosures, that we have in his writings, called the Apocalypse. These are to be taken, therefore, as reliable and authoritative. . . .

There are two points now which I wish to put under a little stronger light. And the first is the *vague* and *general character* of the *scripture* representations of Heaven.

Everybody who has given any attention to this matter recognizes the fact that the heaven of the Bible is a mere outline sketch. Perhaps it could not be anything else, from the nature of the case.

You can find, of course, if you are specially seeking for it, plenty of detailed account of Paradise; minute descriptions of scenery, of mansions, of walls and streets, of vines and trees; but a serious difficulty with it all is, that it is uninspired, being human opinion and conjecture only, and, therefore, without positive authority.

Swedenborg, who professed to obtain his information from angels, is minute even to intolerable tediousness, and Bickersteth, in his poem, "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," is elaborate enough in his details, one would suppose, to satisfy the most speculative minds. But remember this is conjecture, individual opinion and imagination, and may or may not correspond with the reality. More than two hundred years ago Jeremy Taylor, one of England's most brilliant and devout minds, said on this subject, "It is ten to one but when we die we shall find the state of affairs wholly differing from all opinions here, and that no man or sect hath guessed anything at all of it as it is."

But two thing are absolutely certain; one is, that the inhabitants of heaven are morally *good*, and the other, that they are superlatively *happy*. Goodness and happiness are fundamental elements. No one thinks of heaven without them.

That glorious abode is characterized by the absence of all suffering, as it is experienced in this life. There is no sickness, no sorrow, no hunger or thirst unappeased, no oppressive heat of the sun; but exuberant health and every want supplied—no lack of anything that tends to render life an unalloyed enjoyment. God Himself and Jesus, under the figure of the Lamb, minister to the bliss of Heaven's citizens, that are like a flock shepherded in the midst of sweetest pasturage, on the banks of never-failing streams.

All this, however, you perceive is only general. Absence from suffering furnishes a good background for the picture, but presents no distinct figures, and the pastoral life of shepherds, while suggesting great beauty, peace and contentment, gives nothing definite.

What, then, is the *meaning* or *purpose* of this vagueness? Is it to *repress* curiosity and deter from speculation?

It seems to me precisely adapted to awaken curiosity and stimulate speculative thought; and can anyone doubt that an adaptation of this sort, so exactly fitted to its uses, escaped the attention of Him, who must have inspired all the genuine delineations of Heaven? I should prefer to say that it was designed to awaken human interest in the subject. Why not? Are we not to suppose that God designs to have mankind think very frequently and very earnestly about the everlasting home of the vast majority of the human race? What ought men to think of, if not of Heaven? . . Both for comfort and encouragement, and as a matter of *prudence*. . . . Hence *every one* is at liberty, I suppose, to fill up the outlines for himself. Like an outline sketch by the master to be finished by the pupil. . . . I do not see how it can well be otherwise. . . . It is so as a matter of fact.

Individuality recognized by God. Different *classes* of *minds, temperaments, tastes*—as in the world—the *mathematician, poet, artist, merchant, executive business mind, friendship, domestic affections.* . . I assume that these different mental types are to be continued right on in that other world. People will be no more alike there than they are here—save in the one grand trait of *goodness.* . . . . .

It does not make so much matter how we fill up the picture, provided we make it *beautiful, attractive* and *homelike.* These are necessary to the idea of Heaven. . . . The chief thing is to fulfill God's idea of a delightful abode for those who enjoy his fellowship. . . . What we want is, the conception of a place so desirable that mankind shall *prefer* it to *this world* in *its best estate.*

This is the problem ; and I should say, solve it in any way you can, in harmony with God's outlined revelation. . . . .

If there is something special that you want to have there, that seems necessary to your happiness, I have no authority to say you must not put it in ; and when that devout old poet, whose hymn we love to sing, says :—

> "There cinnamon, there sugar grows,
> There nard and balm abound,"

I do not know why he should not have his cinnamon and sugar, or some good substitute, if they will make him happier.

Remember it is *all symbolical.* . . . e. g.—the harps represent instrumental music ; why not an *organ* as well, or even a piano ? . . . The Siberian and his *snows.* . . . . The Ethiopian and his *sun.* . . . . . .

As it stands, unfortunately, the majority of even good people seem to prefer *not* to go there. . . . . .

They indeed do prefer to go to heaven rather than to hell ; but prefer to either, to stay where they are now. . . . . .

But this life is short, soon ended ; and we want a heaven that shall *brighten* the prospect of departure. . . . . .

Such questions as these also are sometimes propounded, viz : "Is heaven a *locality,* or is it a *state* ?" meaning moral condition. Answer, *both.* . . . . . .

Shall we recognize our friends there? . . . Why not there as well as here? . . . . . .

Is not God's *glory* there the *principal thing ?*

Undoubtedly—as it is *here* and everywhere. . . . There is a *fuller revelation* of it there no doubt. . . . But heaven is not *simply* a vast *temple* for worship. . . . . .

The entire *employment* of heaven does not consist in *specific* acts of *worship,* any more than that of Jesus' life here on earth. . .

One important practical effect of this disclosure of heaven, is that it puts *death* in an entirely *new aspect.* It is no longer such a

thing of terror to those who have the prospect of heavenly felicity; through this dark and dreadful gate all the world must pass; and if there is no bright and hope-inspiring prospect beyond, it certainly is dark enough and dreadful enough to anybody. But if, beyond that gloomy portal, as it has appeared in all ages, there is a joyous home, who is going to care much for the gate-way. Like coming to your home at evening from your place of business—through the *tunnel*. . . . It is painful, to be sure, to leave *friends behind*. . . . This is, indeed, a great sting of death, but that is altogether different from the *fear of death itself*. . . . Death is like the *frost* in autumn, that puts an end to the gasping, dying summer; that exchanges the beauty of blossoming flowers for the glory of the painted woods . . . . . .

To many—indeed, perhaps to most people—dying seems to be going into silence and loneliness, but the very reverse is the truth. . . . . .

Yonder is the *populous realm*. . . . . .

Recall John's vision; a *great multitude* which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues. And in that multitude who has not some friends? . . . And Jesus is there. . . . . .

Heaven must be where He is—who loved us and gave himself for us.

They who love Him will surely be found there.

There is a notion, more or less entertained, that somehow in the *experience* of *death* every low and evil element will be eliminated from the character, so that those even dying in their sins enter Heaven in purity, as if death was a *purifying* and *perfecting* process. . .

It is answer enough to say that the Scriptures nowhere so represent it; and they only are competent to speak on the subject. The other is pure conjecture, not to risk the soul upon. As one goes out of this world he enters the next. . . . . .

And thus over the sombre arch of the tomb, on which the gloom has rested for ages, behold in letters of golden light, "*Blessed* are the dead who die in the Lord from *henceforth*: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

This is a *voice from Heaven*. . . . . .

Dropping down the troubled river,
To the tranquil, tranquil shore;
Dropping down the misty river,
Time's willow-shaded river,
To the spring embosomed shore;
Where the sweet light shineth ever,
And the sun goes down no more.
O wondrous, wondrous shore!"

X.

THE CROWN OF LIFE.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." *James i:* 12.

The fundamental idea of temptation is *trial*. It is putting to a test, not as a jocose or aimless experiment, but to attain some ulterior object. And this trying is made use of not merely to ascertain that which already exists, but also to produce that which does not exist—to aid in development. It is putting the human soul through that process to which silver is subjected for purifying and refining. It is not to find out that the silver is really silver, but to ascertain how much alloy is united with it.

(The *furnace* of *Temptation*. . . . . .
The *furnace* of *Affliction*. . . . . .
The world is a grand assay-office for human souls. . .)

Temptation in its most general signification includes all kinds of trouble, affliction, adversity, as well as the manifold enticements to evil. It embraces whatever puts men on trial for moral purification and spiritual refinement, thus fitting them for celestial and eternal uses. Whatever by any solicitation draws a pure soul toward impurity; whatever leads a just person towards injustice, an honest man toward dishonesty, a loyal citizen toward disloyalty; whatever, in short, entices away from goodness toward evil is a trial, by which the love of purity, and justice, and honesty, and loyalty—the love of goodness and right—and the soul's adherence to them are tested. This is specifically called temptation. It is particularly within the sphere of morals.

But there is another department, the sphere of religion, including man's special relations to God. And this sphere is also subject to the same law of temptation or trial.

The world is put on trial to test, and through this trial determine and establish its allegiance to God. And this is true, not only universally of the race, but specially of every individual. We are subject to trial not only in our relations to our fellow men—to the sphere of morals, but also in our God-ward relations—in the sphere of religion.

Many events in life transpire, many a circumstance is coiled about a man, and he is placed in many a condition, whose object is to try the man to see whether he will love God, whether he will trust Him and faithfully obey Him. There are countless multitudes upon

whom sickness has come, losses have fallen, who have been smitten by bereavements, whose ways have been hedged up, who have been tost and crossed in their experiences, to test and develop their love and faith and obedience to God. In the common experimental language of mankind these things are denominated trials, while the others are usually called temptations. But they are all of the same nature. There is more or less suffering connected with them all, and they are all employed instrumentally as tests by which men are tried through an assaying process for purification.

Now there is nothing more essential for the comfort and profit of this mortal life than a right understanding of this doctrine. The sooner we obtain clear and correct ideas concerning this phase of human life the better.

I have, indeed, but little respect for those sentimentalists who catalogue with the darkest ink the woes and ills of human life, recording in large letters its storms and blights, mildews and catastrophies, and its cloudy gloom whirling and sweeping across the landscape of time, leaving men bewildered and benighted in it all.

. . . . . .

God's goodness, wisdom, power and love are not impeached by the trials and temptations of this earthly existence. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." Rejoice by night as well as by day; rejoice not in the sunshine of fair weather only, when manifestly the hills laugh, and the forests clap their leafy hands, and the field and flood glow with the beaming smiles of delight, but rejoice as well when groping through thunderstorms and reeling under the burden of earthquakes, or panting and fainting under the parching drouth. Does the Lord ever cease to reign? Does the Almighty descend from His throne every time a wave of trouble strikes the world? . . . .
Do you imagine, Oh! tried and tempted one! that God has forgotten to be God, because you are in sore distress and environed with dangers, because the furnace of trial is hot and you know not how to quench the flames, nor yet how to wear them upon you as blazing robes of splendor? (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace: never so royally arrayed as by those robing flames. . .

The form of the fourth—the Son of God. The Son of God did not extinguish the furnace fires, but walked in it with them. So will it be in your furnace of trial, if you trust in God.)

Suffering is a part of the Divine economy. We are all born to it. Just as surely as you come into the world at all, you come into the inheritance of suffering. Suffering lies at the threshold when we enter, it frequents every room in the house of life from basement to attic, and meets us on the threshold again when we go out at last. And for a man to go through life with the sole desire to dodge and escape suffering, is as absurd as to rush out of doors during a violent shower of rain with a hope of dodging the descending drops. . . . .

And so with respect to suffering; through it we are all destined to go a greater or less distance; and what we want is Divine help and shelter. For God will not stop this descending shower of suffering; and we must have confidence enough in His wisdom and might and goodness to believe that the world needs it. Somewhere are roots waiting in thirst for it, to which this shower will carry renewed life; and, by-and-by, it may not be in this world, but up there, in Heaven, God's angels will come to us bearing in their hands luscious fruit—and as we taste we shall say, How sweet! how delicious! Whence came it? And they shall answer—this is the fruit of that growth in the earth-world whose unseen roots were watered by the descending showers of suffering.

The earth itself bears witness to this truth. The globe on which we dwell is full of anticipations and preparations for human suffering. The evidences of pain and death lie deep down among the stratified foundations of the planet. The forests swarm with merciless beasts of prey; the seas are full of devouring monsters; and generations of teeth and claws, that did their cruel work long before men appeared upon the earth, are monumentally entombed far down in the rocky chambers of the globe. This is physical pain and suffering to be sure; but it is nevertheless suffering, and a foreshadowing of that which man is called to endure.

Nature itself does not sleep in peace, as though its dreams were all of bliss, but there are starts, and shrieks, and tremblings, and wide uneasiness, as if a fever burned within its frame, and the sharp javelins of pain were hurled through it from side to side. Nor is all this the strange imaginings of the poetry of science. Listen to the words of Paul to the Romans. "For the earnest expectation of the creature (that is Creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same *in hope*. Because the creature itself also (as well as mankind) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together* (with man) *until now.*"

I know this does not mitigate the temptations and fiery trials that come upon man; but I adduce it here to show that suffering is a part of God's economy, and we are not to take it as though "some strange thing happened" to us.

Suffering and temptation are not to be taken as good in themselves. They are good only in such a sense as fire is good to consume dross and so purify the gold; as scourges and prisons are good for knaves and villains; as surgical knives are good for destroyed limbs that need amputation; as the lightning is good to purify the atmosphere; and tempests are good to scatter stagnant clouds of gathered malaria. And it is to be observed moreover that the Scriptures do

not say, blessed is the man who is tempted and tried, but, blessed is the man that *endureth* the temptation, coming out of the trial approved by the great Assayer of souls. The blessedness does not consist in going into temptation, nor passing through the trial, but in *coming out right.* Everything depends upon that. If every man was blessed who was tempted, the world would be crowded with beatitudes.

1. By the teaching of this truth we learn how to look upon and receive the temptations of life. They are to be understood, and accepted when they come, as *disciplinary.* If this earthly existence, with all its ills and manifold sufferings, were to be simply endured—gone through with in the easiest and cheapest manner—without the prospect of any reward beyond, and with no consciousness that passing trials were accomplishing any final good result, it would be a dreary existence indeed to the majority of mankind. There would be no explanation for the painful and often dismal experiences through which men are required to pass. What could it appear but cruelty itself that should compel a poor soul, brought into existence without any act or choice on its own part, to run the dreadful gauntlet of temptations, smitten and bruised by the rough blows of the world and the devil, and yet gain nothing by the process? With such a philosophy I do not see how the world would be much different from a huge rat-pit where cruel men try the temper and skill of their dogs in worrying the doomed victims. It would seem only a wanton exposure to evils that at the best were hard and ruinous things to endure. It would be a banquet of woes, for which no man could have any appetite, and from which we should all be in haste to take our departure, not standing much upon the order or method of our going. I should like to know how any apostle, or any other man with common sense, with such a notion of temptations, could utter the sentiment, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." I should count it all joy when a man could once fall out of them.

But now if these exposures to sin, these opportunities to do wrong as well as to do right, these floods of evil influences whirling about our feet, tripping us up and carrying us out of our way, these languishings and distresses and sorrows unutterable; if these all, instead of being so many highwaymen, assassins, tormentors, chiefs of inquisitions, are converted into schoolmasters, a little rough, and stern, and imperious, to be sure—cruel as death, even, in their anger—nevertheless in office schoolmasters to teach us important things, and prepare us for graduation into eternal life and blessedness; and more than this, graduate us so royally that we shall wear crowns when all earthly kings and coronets have gone back to dust again—I say, if these trials and temptations are our means of discipline for such ends, we may well be called blessed when we have endured them unto a full Divine approval. There is a genuine blessedness in such a glorious issue of experience

If when the trials of life fall upon us, often like showers of fire, we have the belief that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," we have an inspiration of hope and courage that will impel us with vast momentum through the obstructions of human life.

And this is the teaching of Scripture throughout. Suffering is a means to an end. "Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Thus good men seem often to be more sorely tried than evil men. . . . .

(The *trials of Job*. His three comforters (?) assumed that his afflictions were the fruits of his own wickedness. To understand it we need to remember Satan's part in it, and his colloquy with God. Even Christ is represented as in some way necessitated to be made perfect for his work through suffering.)

2. We are, moreover, taught thus, not to make a mistake of looking for *undisturbed repose* and happiness as the objects to be sought for in this earthly existence.

It is perfectly natural for us to desire happiness, to wish to be comfortable, to take our enjoyment as we go along. But there is something that must precede happiness, just as in the building the laying of the foundation precedes the erection of the superstructure.

And those who are simply aiming at enjoyment in this world, are like builders who should work at the erection of houses, trying to lay bricks in the air, having no foundation for them to rest upon. There is no doubt that God desires and intends the happiness of his creatures; for those who are moral beings he intends the highest kind of happiness—the peculiar joy of which such lofty natures are capable. But this joy must have a basis, a foundation; and the foundation is a holy character. And for the establishment and up-building of this essential holiness is our present earthly life ordained and appointed. We are here, therefore, not to enjoy ourselves, but to get ready for such enjoyment.

And the whole arrangement and management of the world under the supervision of God is such as to prevent us from falling into the erroneous notion of looking for comfort and pleasure here. . . We are studying yet, or ought to be. We are shut up in these walls of time, and have tasks given us to accomplish; and it becomes us to be diligent and patient. Sometimes we long to escape, but it is not best for us. . . . . (Have you not been in the schoolroom in *summer* when the fields were mighty in their invitations to visit them? How hard to study! So it is often with us in life. We look through the window of hope and faith into a *realm of happiness* and we long to go.)

3. We must consider also that there is an *essential connection between the Temptation and the Crown.*

The language of the text is, that when the man is tried—that is,

when he has passed through the fiery trial by which he is to be tested and prepared for something afterward, and has been approved by the Assayer, then he shall receive the crown of life. But not before.

So that this crown is not placed upon his head by an arbitrary decree of God, but as a reward, and as a necessary consequence. It is a crown promised to them who love God. And this apart from all figurative terms, means that every man who, by obedience and love to God, becomes a holy character, laying in this life, by Divine grace, the foundations of that character through faith in Christ, shall enter upon a life of bliss in the world to come. Heaven is thus built out of earthly materials. Do you not remember that heavenly Jerusalem described in the Apocalypse? There is not a substance in it—gold, diamonds, pearls, precious stones of all kinds—that does not belong to the earth. And so it is in reality without metaphors.

If you are to have a heaven you must build it by your earthly life; you are saved by faith, to be sure, but faith without works is dead.

. . . . . .

Every Christian, thus, is a crown-maker; that coronet which he shall wear with a royal majesty of joy he is now engaged in constructing. The crown wearers are the crown makers. And yet in this human manufacture of celestial coronets we are so dependent upon the help of God, and receive the privilege of making them from the bleeding hand of Christ, that it may be truly said that they are the gift of God himself.

Thatc elestial life is thus called a crown to signify its royal wealth and splendor. And into that kingly life must enter no base or ignoble element. The graces of character which constitute the substance of that glorious life—as the oil of the lamp is the substance of the flame, that gives the light—must all pass through the refining and purifying process of temptation and trial. So that the gold of the crown, which is the substance of the character, and the precious stones set in it, which are the particular graces, all are prepared by the trials which the Christian is made to endure in this mortal life.

Does not this dignify and glorify suffering? Does it not seem worth while to be tempted and tried? Is there not a mighty motive presented here to *endure* the temptation?

But I have yet one thing more to say, and this is, that there are *two possible effects or results* of this temptation or trial. And there are only two.

One is when the soul, having been subjected to the assaying furnace of this life of temptation and suffering, comes out with the dross consumed, and is thus pronounced pure and good. It is a severe ordeal. But thousands of mankind—yea, millions—are *themselves* consumed, or hardened in the furnace of trial. And this is the *second* result—inevitable if the other does not transpire. . . .

A man is always made better or worse by his trials. They do not

and cannot leave him exactly as he was. He either comes out of the temptation with confirmed faith and exalted virtue, or he goes down under it, and sinks into lower depths of corruption. And thus he either wins a new shield for the next conflict with evil, and imparts fresh strength to his arm, and renewed resolution and courage to his heart, or he flings away his shield, weakens his arm and disheartens himself.

My friends, is it not then of the utmost importance for us to see to it that the temptation and sufferings of life have their *best* effect upon us.

How do we endure *losses*, *bereavements*, *disappointments?* . .

Are all these things confirming us in holiness? imparting to us fresh hungerings and thirstings after righteousness? . . .

Are our trials making us more *patient*, more *humble*, more *loving* toward *God* and *man*, more *sweet-tempered* and *gentle*, more *unselfish* and *unworldly?* Or, on the contrary, are they *hardening* our feelings, *embittering* our dispositions? . . . Let us examine ourselves and see. . . . . .

And now there shall come to every tried and approved soul a day of crowning—a glorious coronation day, when upon your faithful head shall be placed the crown of life. *See how glorious it is!*

This Diamond is your patience crystalized through long years of suffering, and its many brilliant facets ground and polished by the rough instruments of a life of hardship. See how it flashes in the light of Heaven!

These Rubies are the drops of blood which your heart sweat in the Gethsemane of sorrow.

Within these Carbuncles still glow the flames of fiery temptations, through which you were compelled to walk.

This Amethyst contains the bitter cup of grief, which you were called to drink, though now transmuted into the wine of joy.

This Emerald is the recovered verdure of the earthly hopes, which you saw wither and die beneath the burning sun of disappointment.

And the Gold of which the frame-work of the crown is made, and in which these jewels all are set, is your earthly life passed through the fire of trial and refined into the pure gold of a holy character. Take it, therefore—O redeemed spirit! wear this crown of life through eternal ages amid the glories of Heaven. And may it be the sublime and joyous destiny of each of us, through the abounding grace of God, to win and wear this resplendent crown of life and glory and eternal blessedness.

SELECTIONS FROM SERMONS.

"Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost."

SELECTIONS FROM SERMONS.

THE PHARISEE AND THE SINNER.

Jesus, on certain occasions, uttered some very severe words against the class of people known as Pharisees. And on their part they usually kept themselves quite aloof from the popular Galilean. Now and then, however, some one among them, for reasons of his own, went so far in the direction of friendliness as to invite the miracle-working Rabbi to dine with him. And the Master was accustomed to accept such invitations. It seems to have made little difference with him, whether a Publican sinner, or a Pharisee saint, opened his house and spread his table: he was ready to sit down with him.

As society was then constituted, no one questioned the propriety of a respectable man dining with a Pharisee; but to be caught at table with publicans and sinners was a disgrace that few could bear. Jesus was judged on this precise basis of public opinion—and was condemned. . . . . .

On this theory, I rather wonder that pure-eyed and purer-hearted angels can ever be induced to come down into this low neighborhood of man's abode. If public sentiment among the stars is what it is on the earth, one would be inclined to suppose that those ministering spirits would look carefully about and think twice before they ventured to touch the soiled hand of humanity.

Now this dinner-scene, of which I have just read the account, was remarkable for the bringing together of the two extreme classes of society. (*Luke*, 7: 36–50.)

Simon was a man in good social standing; a religious person; probably not one of those who robbed widows and then tried to conceal the robbery under prayers of unusual length and solemnity; but still a man who would not touch a sinner with his finger-tips for the world, or be touched by one. This fastidious and well-reputed man sat, or rather reclined at the head of the table. But there had come in, either by a bold push, or through some door-ajar of etiquette, a woman of notoriously bad reputation. By one means or another she had made her way into the dining-hall even as far as the feet of Jesus, and there she stopped. The guests were eating and talking; the servants were busy running hither and thither; but this poor woman belonged to neither class. She was an intruder.

There she stood, one of the city's sinners, weeping; and as the tears fell on those feet—through which not long afterward the Roman

soldier drove the spike—she hasted and wiped them off with her tresses, and among the tears fell warm kisses, as if the spring clouds rained violets. And, last of all, she poured the fragrant contents of her alabaster box, not on the Master's head, for which the ointment was intended, but upon his feet.

Mark the contrast. Simon was entertaining the Lord in a hospitable way, with a dinner—and no doubt a good one, provided with considerable pains and expense. That nameless woman was expressing her love for the same Rabbi by tears, kisses and ointment.

This was the exterior of the scene. But if you look within, even into the mind and heart, you discover a remarkable moral antagonism. Simon is self-righteous, self-satisfied; the sinner is precisely the reverse. The Pharisee, looking through the notions which his education had given him, considered the very finger-touch of that woman a moral defilement. And he was surprised that his guest did not resent the tender expressions lavished on his feet. "Why," said Simon to himself, "surely this man is no prophet, after all; for if he were he would recognize the character of the woman, and, *of course*, would not allow her even to shed tears on his feet." . . . . .

But Simon misjudged—misjudged *Jesus*, *himself*, the *woman*, *religion*, *God* and *humanity*. . . . . .

It was all very well no doubt, for Simon to invite Jesus to dinner, paying him, thus far, a kind of respect, that had the element of publicity. There were hundreds of Pharisees, who had not the moral courage to do even as much as that. You may say that it was quite complimentary. And yet it is evident enough from the records that Simon's heart was not really in the entertainment. From whatever motive he had invited Jesus, it is plain on the face of it, that he did not consider it necessary for him to be very ceremonious in his attentions. Perhaps he thought he had invited a man inferior to himself in social position, and therefore the common courtesies of the occasion might be neglected. . . . . .

But Jesus took the opportunity to let the Pharisee understand that his impoliteness was recognized. He charged him with a neglect of the ordinary courtesies of hospitality. Simon had not furnished water for his guest's feet, according to the custom; had failed in the details of the toilet before dinner; yes, had not even greeted him with the customary kiss. Of all this discourtesy our Lord very delicately, but still plainly, reminded the Pharisee, and drew out the parallel so as to honor the woman and shame the host.

The whole value of Simon's hospitality seems to have consisted in a kind of formal politeness that had no root in genuine esteem, certainly none in affection. It was as heartless as are a hundred of the daily courtesies of society, that are nothing more than the revolving wheels of established etiquette. . . . . Now there is, my friends, such a thing as mere *religious courtesy*; or the act o,

formal politeness toward God. There is such a thing as the etiquette of piety. It is carrying out in one's demeanor toward the Divine Being, that which is so well understood in fashionable society. There is much said, in these days, about the hollowness of a great deal in social manners, about paste-board friendships, and card invitations; and I suppose there is some foundation for such criticisms. But is there not a greater evil than all this—right before our eyes? . . There are multitudes of people, all through our christian land, who pay deference to religion, in various ways, but who are not, after all, openly and avowedly religious. They are not conscious of a religious life, or any positive and definite religious experience. They may invite the Lord to dine with them on Sunday, in the way of showing some respect to religious institutions and observances; but are not impelled by love or gratitude or sympathy. There is no true reverence, no devout worship, no congenial fellowship, any more than there was in the heart of Simon the Pharisee toward his divine guest. . .

But further than this. There are some, also (how many we have no means of determining), within the visible boundaries of the church, who are deferential and courteous toward God and religion; who attend upon religious services habitually, make contributions to benevolent objects, and join in the forms of worship. It is possible, even, to be punctilious in the etiquette of religion; to celebrate the sacraments, observe the sacred days, recite the appointed prayers in choice words and graceful phrase.

On the surface, all this presents a fair appearance. No one can find fault with it. It shines like pure gold, glitters like genuine diamond, has the lustre of the real pearl. And it is not pleasant to have to say that, in this respect, "all is not gold that glitters," even as this maxim establishes its truth in a thousand other particulars.

Now, the sad thing about all this is, that such a fine exterior is possible, with nothing inside to correspond. And the saddest of all perhaps is, that men and women may be the victims of such counterfeits. They may suppose themselves friends of the Divine One; may imagine that spreading a table for the Heavenly Guest is the same as living with him; that to have him close at hand is equivalent to having him in the heart.

And yet there may be, not far off, some poor (consciously poor), sin-sick soul, battered and torn by the fierce fight of Satan; with heart still fluttering, like the chased dove in its cote, past which the mighty wing of the hawk has just swept, bearing away strong beak and sharp talons; touching only the feet of the Great Deliverer, saying not a word in the ears of men, looking at nothing and thinking of nothing but the beautiful white hope that has just risen like an angel out of the black gulf of a desponding wretchedness. Such a one there may be in some corner or shadow of the temple of worship, to whom God is just ready to say—"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

As our Lord said of the publican who stood in the temple praying at the same time with the self-righteous pharisee, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other." It is not the good things a man can say of himself or think of himself before the Lord, that makes his prayer acceptable. A God that looks straight down into the heart, even to the depths of secret motives, cannot be imposed upon by stereotyped Pater Nosters, or pious rhetoric. We are not heard by the Divine ear for much speaking. Men do not come nigh to God by the blowing of trumpets, neither by consecrated vestments, nor devout pantomime. A tear dropped on the feet of Jesus may be a grander element in worship than a thousand-voiced chorus ; a box of perfume, broken by the impulse of a contrite heart, is sweeter to the Heavenly Father than all the incense ever burned in smoking censer before the holiest altar, in the holiest temple on the earth. How much, do you suppose, does God care for the traps and tricks and trinkets of ceremony? He who sits in glory above the heavens, and round about him in flashing circuits whirl countless suns and constellations, what to him can be the tinsel spangles on the face of priestly robes?

But the glitter of a tear in the human eye is so precious a thing, that all the splendors of the starry universe cannot prevent God's all-observing gaze from seeing it. I cannot think that it looks especially imposing to the Almighty when hundreds of priests, bishops and cardinals, clad in all their gorgeous livery, in the midst of imperial pomp, heralded by trumpets, and accompanied by all the swelling tone-grandeur of organs and orchestras, chant their solemn litanies under the resounding dome of St. Peter's. It may overawe and inspire the human beholder, but it is a tame spectacle to those who look down from the *inside* of Heaven. The Bible nowhere tells us that the angels are particularly interested in this sort of ritual celebration ; but it does tell us that they rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. And away yonder, in an obscure corner of the chapel, counting her beads, amid the liturgic pomp, may be the one contrite sinner who has found the feet of Jesus, and finding his feet, has found his ear and his heart, and his tongue of benediction. The sinner's tear is always more than a match for the pharisee's dinner.

What I want to say, then, in the next place, is that *persistence* and *love* express the soul's true condition and attitude toward God. There is nothing which can be a substitute for these. He who searches the hearts of the children of men knows well enough the wide difference between ceremonial attention and a spiritual state.

This respectful attention to religion is a great deceiver of mankind. There is a tendency in it to soothe the conscience and satisfy the demands of the soul. It is to genuine piety what anodynes are to food : they steal away the consciousness of suffering, although they do not nourish and invigorate the system. There are thousands of

people who stand from week to week and year to year precisely in this position. They have no positive religious life, never shed a tear of penitence, nor thrill with a rapture of spiritual delight. To them Jesus is a very great and good being, worthy of the world's homage; but somehow they forget to render their own homage to him. Religion is a very proper and respectable thing among men, but not a radical, revolutionizing, reconstructing power in human nature. It is this, outside of the church, that renders the work of evangelizing nominally Christian communities so difficult a task; and this *inside* of the church, that begets so much weakness and inefficiency, that turns the streams of vitality—which ought to go leaping and flashing onward into offensive pools of stagnation. Oh! how the world cries out, not knowing what ails it, for this positiveness, this *earnestness* in religion.

If Jesus is anything to the *world*, he is not a man simply to be invited to dinner; his relations to mankind involves more vital interests than that. Is your idea of a *physician* that of a man to be invited to your house occasionally to a dinner-party? . . . . Jesus is not simply a celebrated person to whom it is becoming to show respect. . . . . .

The true way to come to him is to come as the sinner came—to his *feet*, impelled by the *consciousness of sin* and *moral want.* * * The Jesus that the pharisee sought was the *popular teacher*, the celebrated *miracle worker*. The Jesus that the sinner sought was the Divine *healer* and *helper of the needy*. . . . . Man's true condition and posture toward Jesus is not that of *courtesy* but *penitence*, not *hospitality* but *love* and *trust*. . . . . *Formality* can never satisfy God, he requires *devotion*. As between human friends—in the relations and intercourse of the family. * *

To Simon: "I have somewhat to say unto *thee*." To the woman: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in *peace*."

CHEERFULNESS IN TRIAL.

. . . . There are those who wear their sorrows on the outside; the sadness of their hearts saddens their whole exterior. Wherever they appear it is cloudy and rainy; when they disappear the sun shines out again.

On the other side are those whose hearts are no less heavy, with the burdens of grief, but you must take a second and more careful look to discover it. They are known among their neighbors and friends as persons of remarkable cheerfulness. You know they are in trouble; that day and night the burden remains; that the darkness is all the while striving to eclipse them totally; and yet there is upon

them that peculiar brightness which comes from sunbeams strained through clouds. It is not morning, neither is it noon or evening; but the reflection of that heavenly light, that makes the eternal day beyond the sunrise and the sunsets. . . . . .

If the Christian believes that he ought to grow in grace, let him take this as one of the constituent elements of that which we call grace. To be sure we ought to be increasing in faith and patience, in purity and meekness, in love to God and man; but I believe it impossible to grow in these qualities without becoming more cheerful. When the apple ripens on the bough, there are certain processes going on within the fruit, under the influence of the sunbeams and according to the laws of vegetable life; and you perceive this fact in the tinting of the rind. The color comes upon the surface, just as fast as the ripeness comes within. The red, and yellow, and pink on the outside become both results and evidence. So it is with human character. Troubles and suffering are the appointed ripening influences. And cheerfulness is the tinting of the fruitage.

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

The remarkableness of it is that it was not a human voice. . . It was a sublime instant when, after His baptism, Jesus stood on the river bank praying, and from a rift in the blue sky a beautiful dove sped down to Him, and as it touched Him, disappeared. It flew not back again into the heavens nor away into the desert; somehow it remained with Him. That was the Spirit of God descending upon Him and *remaining*. . . . . This voice, if anything at all, is not of this world; it is from above; it is Divine. But to say this and believe it, is to put a window into the blue dome of the sky, through which we look up into another world. To say that a voice is heard sounding down from the heavens, is saying that there is somebody up there. . . . . This was the highest and most authoritative testimony possible. We can perceive that it was a timely witness, for Jesus was just then stepping forth into the open life of His Messianic career. He was no longer a young man of Nazareth, dutiful to his mother, kind to his neighbors, modest, true, pure, magnanimous and religious, but now the Redeemer of Mankind, the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. He was no longer the son of Mary, as his friends knew Him, but now the *Son of God*. They had called Him Jesus for thirty years up there in Galilee; but now that name Jesus was opened, and into it was put the infinite significance of Saviour. If I wanted to undertake the solution of the greatest puzzle ever offered to the

ingenuity of mankind, I would set myself to the task of trying to explain the historical phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth on natural principles. . . . . Assume a mere *man* as the Founder of Christianity and explain Christian history if you can. Assume the *Divine* nature of Jesus and see how the clew guides through the whole *Labyrinth*.

PRAYER.

. . . . I do not deny the reflex influence of prayer: this has always called forth the admiration even of infidels. But it remains for serious consideration whether prayer does not influence God as well as affect ourselves. And I think there can only be one answer to this without sweeping away the whole foundation of prayer; when we pray we believe it makes a difference with God. We stand in our petitions upon that belief as an unchangeable basis; take this away and we fall with our petitions on our lips into the gulf of a sublime mockery—we prattle sacred things and play the devout rhetorician, and that is all. When I fall upon my face before God and pray, "O, Lord, through the merciful provision of Christ, the Lamb of God, take away my sins," am I to understand that God does not really forgive me, but only suffers this prayer to react upon my soul, giving me an elevation of feeling? No! a thousand times. I believe upon the basis of that prayer, if I am honest, sincere and penitent, God performs the act of pardon, which without the prayer He would never have done; so that by praying I move God to forgive me; now, then, I have hope, have courage, and confidence, and power; but not otherwise. Prayer is a motor of God, and not of ourselves merely; hence we need this simple faith before we can pray at all. . . . . .

Besides honesty in prayer we need to have *confidence in God*. We must have the assuring persuasion that God is not only able but willing to answer our requests. A man might as well undertake to run a boat up the Falls of Niagara as to push a petition toward the presence of God, when he believed the Divine character and will poured right against his wishes and wants. But when we believe God is sympathetic with us, desiring our good even more than we do ourselves, not only ready, but longing to help us and give us the things best for us; when we know that the entire current of Divine thoughts and feelings and purposes is right in our favor; then can we set our petitions adrift with the assurance that they will be borne away rather than dashed back upon us; you cannot open your heart to a man or woman in whom you have not full confidence; you can tell

them outside things; you can skim the surface of your soul in conversation with them; but you will not let your guarded tongue dive for a single pearl down into the depths of your secret affections; but when you do come to trust them, to confide in them, how quickly then tongue, lips and eyes even, become bold and ready pearl divers, that bring up all precious secrets out of the unillumined gulf of the soul. And thus it is between ourselves and God; if God is not your intimate friend, if you are afraid to lie upon His bosom and look up into His eyes of holy and tender love; if you shrink from Him and stand trembling in His presence when occasions bring you there compulsively, and hasten away again upon the swift feet of the first opportunity, you will be constrained and dumb; your speech will wear chains, and the springs of your emotions will be sealed with ice. You never will be able to pray well until you and God become better friends. You may write petitions and send them in to Him; you may commit a prayer from the floating phrases of religious parlance; but to go into the Divine presence and reverently embrace His feet, and talk naturally and honestly and confidently with Him, this you cannot yet do. First of all cultivate an acquaintance with God. We are too great strangers. We do not walk with Him as did Enoch. We do not talk with him as did Abraham, who is renowned above the great ones of history; who among princes is first born, and among kings themselves is super-royal by the divine title—Friend of God. Believe God; take Him at His word; cultivate and encourage this simple trust of a child in Him, and your prayers will have in them the right hand of Omnipotence. . . . . .

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD.

. . . . . All men love and will love something. No degradation can crush out parental and filial affection. So that when God presents himself as a father, immediately the multitudes of men standing in the light of this universal human relationship grasp the conception and behold their God.

See, too, how love is made *various* in the soul. There is love to parents, to children, to brothers and sisters, to husband and wife, to society, to country, to mankind and to God. In all these different relationships it is the same emotion variously directed and receiving diversity of shade from the objects themselves.

Hence from the dawn of childhood, up to the venerable patriarch bidding the world farewell at the door of the sepulchre, this sun of love shines upon the soul through the entire day of life. It is the electric force of human life. The tragedies and comedies of the world are based upon it. It requires no interpreter when one travels from

nation to nation. Tongues, which separate men wide as the poles upon other topics, form no barriers to this universal truth. And the sublime reason is, the world is made of *one heart.* We do not all *think* alike ; we reason differently from the same premises ; there are almost as many conclusions as there are brains in the world. But the moment we begin to *feel*, we approach each other by a kind of magnetism. And when our feelings have culminated, as they do naturally, in love, we find the nations to be of one blood, though scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Hence, when God comes appealing to this world-wide emotion, declaring that it was His *love* which prompted the plan of redemption, that by love He can be best and most perfectly expressed, the human heart responds, touched by the sweet divine voice—"My Lord and my God." This is the key to all genuine religion.

But it is not to be denied that modern theology has, by reason of its philosophy and speculation, swung too far from this central truth. It has made "holiness originate in power, and justice in the right of property," lifting up Divine Sovereignty to an overshadowing height, and giving it the hues of tyranny. And this, too, because of the ambitious intellect.

It is to the heart that God comes, and not to the mind. In the affections God builds His temple, and not in the thoughts. In the material universe, if you will go abroad to see, you will find displays of Divine wisdom, skill, taste ; but that will do us poor sinners very little good. What we want is a *Divine heart*, sympathetic, warm, brooding upon our souls with sun-like affection, distilling upon our hearts the sweet dew of life and joy, in this our night of sin and sorrow. . . Our God is love. And, because He loved the world, He sent his Son to die for us. This is the simple story. . . . . .

THOMAS, THE TWIN.

. . . . Being thoughtful, logical, sensuous and conscientious, Thomas was, by a kind of necessity, *inquisitive*, and especially so respecting the grounds of his belief. He was a conscientious man, holding in high regard his own mental integrity. It was not for one like him, therefore, to say that he believed a thing when he really had no convictions at all ; to swallow dogmas and creeds without so much as stopping to taste them. He had no such unfortunate facility of faith. And he was too thoroughly honest, withal, for that.

No matter if Peter and John believed it ; neither his personal identity nor responsibility could be confounded with theirs. It was their privilege and their duty to decide for themselves concerning the grounds of belief ; but by no possibility could he invite them to

believe for him. Their faith, to be sure, was a consideration; he respected their convictions, and gave them due value; but faith is a personal matter: every individual may believe, but he must do it for himself; just as the whole human race breathe a common atmosphere, but every one must use his own lungs. Now, when a man comes to understand, and to feel that the exercise of belief is not like going down to the shore of the sea, to walk at random on the sands, and pick up here and there any chance shell that may happen to strike the eye; but that it is rather like diving into the gulfs and going down to the very bottom after the genuine pearls of truth, he will cease to tolerate recklessness of faith. When we realize that believing or not believing is very serious business, that it takes hold of destiny itself, laying a formative hand on character and shaping for eternities, we shall become sincerely inquisitive. We shall not do, as is often done, merely put our names on the long list with the others, without so much even as reading the document, for the sake of getting rid of the matter and saving time for business. Your mental autograph is not faith necessarily. And it is this important fact, of reasonable, free enquiring into the grounds of belief, that this apostle Thomas represents. . . . . .

We have this urgent question of the times, "What shall we do with this languid indifference and practical no-belief of our modern Christianity?" And, it seems to me, no one with open eyes and ears can fail to perceive that the answer is already coming in this form—at least one of the answers, "We will pass once more in review our formulas of faith." It may be replied that in our day people care but little for the old questions of theology; no enthusiasm can now be awakened by discussing such points as set everybody on fire fifty years ago; and that the grand colossal question of the age is concerning the person of Christ. No doubt this is true. But what is this but going to the very bottom of the whole matter of Christianity, carrying the free inquiry of the age down to the very foundation of all religious faith? Jesus of Nazareth, himself, is now the grand centre of the sublime conflict of faith. We are not fighting around the Apostolic Fathers, Augustine, Luther, Calvin and their antagonists. There are plenty of sects, and enough of sectarianism, stirring up their little clouds of dust by their petty skirmishes here and there, on the field; there are a few survivors of the middle ages, who have not yet heard of the discovery of America by Columbus, of the invention of the art of printing, and who suppose that scholastic disputes about the dimensions of angels are the most vital questions of the day; but yet, clearly enough, the forces in the battle gather in upon the Son of God. It is the Divine Captain of our Salvation, whose all-surmounting crest shows where the front is. . . . A faith that is not freely discussed becomes a dead faith; and a faith that is not thought about is not discussed, and therefore dies. In the earlier periods of all belief, when

it is obliged to fight its way into the world's recognition, it is vigorous. But when once it has obtained the victory, and there is no longer any opposition, it is very sure to become feeble and inactive. And it is always one of the functions of free enquiry, to arouse a languid faith out of its perilous lethargy. Belief has its harvests, as the earth has, and every farmer understands the necessity of ploughing deep, of going down into the subsoil. He might for a time raise something, if he should only scratch the surface with brambles; but the great, heavy, golden harvests, that make the hungry world laugh with a joyous hope, always wave over the fields where the deep-cutting plough has faithfully done its work. So it is in minds and religion; the human mind must be subsoiled by meditation, its thoughts must be turned up to the bright and warm sun of truth, if its beliefs shall bear the fruit of character and life. . . . . .

Human life must pause and perish, if the element of faith is to be taken out of it. Not a day nor an hour ever goes by, without the exercise of this faculty. We are constantly using it, though unconsciously. Men, everywhere, are reposing the most entire confidence in the material world. They believe in sunrises, which they have never seen; in harvests, that are yet in the seed-grain; in ten thousand facts the world over, which have never come under their personal observation, which they are obliged to accept on the word of others. There is no difficulty experienced by manhood in putting their trust in what they call the laws of nature, however much they may find in confiding in God, who is forever expressing His will through those laws. . . . Does anyone fail to perceive, that all things are passing through a process of sublimation? Physical science itself is growing spiritual; its students are getting back in among the forces which are invisible; they have gone already further than they can see or touch; and whether they are conscious of it or not are in the realms of faith. I am aware that some of them deny spiritual existence altogether, and find only phosphorus where we find a human mind; but it must be a supernatural kind of phosphorus; and I have no fear that philosophers will ever be able to persuade mankind that they have no souls. Spirit and matter is the root of the universe. God, who made all things, is a spirit; and if we are created in His image and likeness, we are spirit too; and if we are spirit, then the grandest part of our being lies within a sphere which cannot be entered by our senses; which must, therefore, be a realm of faith.

. . . . The time is coming, when men shall be rational without being mere rationalists, and shall be believers without being superstitious; when doubt shall be only the vestibule to faith. The central religious question of our times is, "What think ye of Christ?" People are thinking, and they are going to think still more; they must understand that it is their privilege and duty to think; but that thinking is the highway to solid convictions. We want, in our

day, Christians of stalwart faith; and only by a free enquiry, and patient meditation, will they obtain it. The world is now open from pole to pole, and inviting the gospel to enter everywhere: the last barrier is thrown down; and Christianity stands upon the earth among her foes, with her friends about her; and the Christians of this land, especially, who are looking across the Rocky Mountains and beyond the Pacific, are called to meet the mental and religious condition of Asia, as well as of Europe and America. The thinkers of Confucius and the thinkers of Christ are soon to meet face to face upon the western slopes of our continent. . . . .

INDIVIDUALITY.

. . . Everything in this passage (*John*, 20: 16) depends upon the intonation—the expression. There are two words in it containing the whole—Mary and Rabboni. . . . When Jesus called her "woman," it only caused her to tremble a little and look down, answering respectfully, "Sir." But the moment He utters that name, "Mary," there is a new heaven and a new earth above and around her. Oh! the morning did not break upon Calvary in such beauty and glory, as that lovelier morning of hope and joy in the grief-benighted heart of Mary Magdalene. . . . The name implies that its owner is *somebody*—an individual being; not to be lost or mingled in the existence of any other. And this involves for us realities the most momentous. And first among these is *Existence*. What is it to be—to exist? To be a rock on the side of a mountain, warmed by the sun and dashed by the rains, is something. To be the mountain itself, lifted up in sublimity, crowned with stars, robed with many leaved forests, listening day and night to a thousand fountains and streams, through cool caverns within and upon sunny slopes without, and to innumerable birds singing among the trees, and to wandering winds that make every branch a stringed instrument; this is more than to be the rock. And I think to be the eagle building her nest in the cloud-curtained crag, is more than to be the mountain. But to be a man climbing the steeps and planting the flag of discovery and possession upon the summit, is immeasurably more than all. Heaven and earth, spirit and matter, time and eternity, are involved in the human existence. It is something wonderful—almost fearful to be a man. The mere gift of existence, with all its mysteries and possibilities and glories, should be the basis of perpetual thanksgiving. . . . Another fact involved here is *Personality*. . . . Nothing can take from men, the "I" and the "Me," and the "Mine." This is sacred to us, and we appeal to Jehovah, our Creator, for its defence. Even the

slave, robbed of so much by his oppressor, stands in his social and civil nakedness before God, and says "I" and "Me"—showing the native kingliness of the soul, which nothing can bruise or crush or draw out of him. . . . But how many seem to like to be absorbed, to play the shadow for others, to be satellite and revolve. And yet we have but one centre and one primary, and that is God. Around Him we are to revolve, and grow noble and glorious upon the sublimest orbit of life. . . . It is now into this private circle of existence, to this Personality, and to shape this individual destiny, that Christ presents Himself as our Saviour. In other words, the gospel speaks directly to us, calling every one by his own name. The message is to *you*. . . . I think a great many leave their names and individuality at home upon the Sabbath, and simply exist in the generic man. They believe that Christ died for the world; they admire this sublime sacrifice for the race. . . . But when you take them, man by man, and put them upon their names as distinct persons, the duty of becoming a christian and the need of salvation cease to have so clear an application. But be assured, my friends, religion is entirely a personal matter. God thinks of us not as a mass of humanity, but as individuals. . . . What we want to know and feel is that Christ speaks to us, calling our names as clearly and distinctly as He addressed Mary at the Sepulchre.

THE BEHAVIOR BOOK.

The Bible is the great Behavior Book. There are many treatises composed by purely human wisdom, on the topics of manners, conduct, etiquette, politeness, rules of good breeding, behavior, and other members of the same family of subjects. But for the most part they pertain to the outside. They tell the young people about to enter the mysteries of social life, how to approach and recede in the drawing room, how to stand, or sit or walk; how to perform in the dining hall; and other things of kindred import. That is, they teach a galvanic politeness. Every specific rule operates as a shock upon the muscular system, putting the subject in this position or that, according to the particular case, as galvanism moves the body that has no inner life. And the result, as you might suppose, is a great amount of mechanical politeness, like the figures upon some old curious clocks, that come out and perform at the ringing of the bell. But this Bible, not despising manners and social intercourse by any means, gives directions that put life in the centre. They furnish a soul to the body, and a spirit to the soul, that is a perpetual fountain of politeness. It can neither dry up in the summer of society, nor freeze up in its frosty and snowy winter. And, what is further desirable, the rules of behavior which

the Bible furnishes are applicable in all latitudes and at all times. These outside books vary in their directions to suit Constantinople, Rome, Paris, London and New York. But the Bible says the same things for all men round the entire globe. What is good in Pekin is just as good in San Francisco; what is good for New England is equally good for the Northwest. The Bible fixes its attention upon humanity; it regards essential manhood, aiming to develop and foster that; the millinery of life it does not much concern itself with. Nevertheless, it teaches all essentials minutely enough for the conduct of life.

And if any one is desirous to excel in good manners, to attain to the best and most beautiful social behavior, I would commend this Book of books for careful and daily perusal. . . . .

Christians are not only to love, but to love *fraternally*.

This brotherly estate was one of the earliest developments of the church. The pressure of the great world without, full of animosities and antagonisms and enmities, compressed the little flock of believers into a remarkably close union. Persecution drove them together; the bitterness of the world sweetened them toward each other; the blood of the martyrs cemented them with a divine adhesion. They were in the freshness of first love. Those were golden days. Really for them, in the exuberance of their new life, there was a new heaven and a new earth—old things had passed away; behold all things had become new. They stood upon the Mount of Love, so near to the gate of Heaven that they looked over the wall of ages into the Millennium, and fancied it just at hand. It rolled its golden cycles close upon them, and in the blaze of the enrapturing vision they did not discover that between it and them lay hundreds and hundreds of dark and weary years—ages of war, ages of persecution, ages of disappointment, ages of incredible toil and suffering. And it was well they did not.

Blessed and ever venerable fathers of the church! Thank God that He gave them one hour of glorious vision; that He put them for a day in Paradise, imbosomed in beauty and delight, before He threw open the gates and marched them forth to suffering, and poured their own blood upon the rising sun of this heavenly prospect. I think that was an apocalyptic vision for the church. It was but a momentary glance, a transient view, and the sundered sky closed its blue walls upon it forever.

As John, when in the spirit, saw Heaven opened, and looking through beheld the wonders of approaching eras, so, it seems to me, this simple transaction of the early disciples was permitted that we might, from age to age, look back and see the future. It is easy to look back and see the past; the great thing is to look back and see what shall be hereafter. Thus I think God lifted up the Millennial state at the sunrise of Christianity, and waved it like a flaming banner before the world, as a vanishing signal to show the church which way to march.

After that, says the Apostle, be pitiful—that is, *tender-hearted.* I suppose tenderness to be one of the Christian graces. There is a spirit of hardness in the world that passes often for manliness. But this has no place in the Christian system. A Shylock in commerce that will have his pound of flesh; not a sand grain of mercy in the scales; a cast-iron judge whom no pity can melt; and characters of similar mould in other human relations, are not authorized by the gospel. They are inevitably against union. There is no coalescence in them. You cannot cause rocks to combine, nor icicles to commingle by shaking them together. And unless Christians have this quality of tenderness they will not come into unanimity, although they subscribe to the same creed and believe in the same polity, sit under the same roof and listen to the same preacher.

And then, there is one thing more which I hope you will not consider too small to be mentioned in the company of these other great principles. It is the modest request—"*be courteous.*" If people will live together harmoniously they must have some kind of etiquette agreed upon. And there ought to be no such courtesy in the world as might be found in the church of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not the sowing of dragon's teeth, from which a crop of armed men spring up and rush from their birth into wholesale fratricide. I am not willing to admit that there can be or ought to be more courtesy anywhere in the world than among Christians. If the gospel of Christ does not make its believers gentlemen and ladies in the true and best sense, then it does not accomplish all it might or should. I grant you it does not give specific directions for the management of the hands and feet in company, but it gives you such a pervading and controlling spirit that you will not rudely smite the sensibilities of others, nor heedlessly and with guilty awkwardness tread upon their obvious rights. Because the salvation of the soul is so great a thing it does not annihilate minuteness and detail in life. . . . . .

JESUS AT HOME.

. . . . I love to think of the blessed Master going through this—and so knowing how to sympathize with us.

The daily cares; the endless work; the weariness and watching of life; the rolling of stones up hill, to have them roll immediately down again; the tread-mill of toil, for we must work or starve.

Home-life, moreover, is forever dignified and beautified by the fact that Jesus passed through it on his way to the cross. It is even made a noticeable point in the Scriptures that he dwelt at home in Nazareth, obeying his parents, being subject to them.

What a wonderful world *home* is! In its retirements, its sanctities, its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, its births and deaths;

and all girdled by the golden zone of love! It is heaven trying to retain a foothold on the planet. It is the old forfeited Eden trying to keep itself alive in the memories of mankind.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

. . . . To enter the sanctuary with the object of worshiping God by prayer and praise personally; to go there with a grateful offering for the blessings of the past week; to go there to be in communion with the Divine Spirit—are there not many who do not habitually regard these facts? They come to be entertained or instructed by the discourse; but forget that God expects from them some personal recognition; they come to enjoy the music, instead of lifting up their own voices, and joining the popular chorus praising God. I am compelled to think there is a great deal of sin committed every Sabbath-day in the church, by a habitual disregard of the devotional part of the exercises. Some seem to think there is not much lost, if only they arrive in time for the sermon. I should like to know which you can slight with the surest impunity—your God or your preacher? For one let me entreat you to offend your pastor a thousand times, but your God never. Disregard, depreciate the sermon if you please, but do not offer any indignity to God by slighting his worship in the ordinary public rites. . . .

"AND THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE."

. . . . There are many who have carried their sorrows through long and weary years, making the journey of life as it were by night; and for them entering Heaven will be like the flight of a bird through the sunrise up into the splendor of full day, glad to quit the darkness, shaking the dew from its wings, and filling the sky with the echoes of its exulting song.

And there the sorrows for those whom the tenderest affection lost, will be forever replaced by the joy of that heavenly and inseparable re-union

The weeds of mourning which the heart had worn will be exchanged for the radiant robes of endless delights. The eye, which along the ways of suffering and grief had gone ever gazing dimly through the lenses of tears, will there receive a bright and unobstructed vision. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

. . . . . .

And consider, moreover, that no sunset in that celestial world will ever usher in the *night of death*. . . . . Nor ever shall the *night of sin* pour its fearful gloom over that cloudless day of holiness. . . . . To all who walk in any darkness here; to all who *fear* these *nights*, and are distressed on account of them, what a glorious prospect does this apocalypse of Heaven disclose! . . . . . A little further on, and lo, the morning breaks!

PURE RELIGION.

Let us advance to the definition itself. It is twofold: *Sympathy with the afflicted.* We are to look after these afflicted ones, and that implies action.

The injunction is not satisfied by wafting sighs towards their distress; it is not enough that they are remembered in our daily prayers, and that our hearts sometimes stir with pity when we see the signs and badges of their sorrow.

Nor are we to wait till they come to us with their burdens, for almost every man whose heart is not wholly petrified may be softened by the story of sorrow and the vision of sadness.

There is no particular merit in yielding to the powerful appeals of suffering; even heathen can do that. But to have the heart on the alert for sorrow, for want and misery; so that it is ever abroad in search of such objects; so that it pities before it hears, and sympathizes before it sees. That is to be in the required state. For then it is a fountain which flows without solicitation. But in the other case the sympathy is like a little water in a deep well, it must be pumped up by laborious strokes.

On the Alps the monks of St. Bernard spend their lives in rescuing bestormed and benighted travelers. They send out their sagacious and faithful dogs with blankets and refreshments in search day after day. They do not wait till the sufferers come to their door; for the point of necessity is before that, and they do not know that travelers are coming up the mountain at any particular hour.

But they send on the probability—yea, the possibility that some one may just now be dropping exhausted upon the snow, while the storm flies, with a dreary howl, to cover him up. It is possible and that is enough. Their benevolence and sympathy walk abroad upon the unhospitable mountains amid all storms.

So it is in the heart where pure religion dwells: its sympathy is ever abroad with hands full of blessings for the needy.

Such a heart is not a house shut and silent and dark, where affliction must shake the window and thunder at the door to waken a

sleepy response within. But it is the Alpine hospital, with warm, blazing fires upon the hearth, lights streaming out of the windows far down the darkness, and well-laden messengers gone out to find unknown and voiceless distress. . . . . .

When God takes away human parents He says to His children on earth, Be in place of those whom I have removed. When He takes away health He says, Be health to that man or that woman. When He takes away friends He says, Be friends to the mourning. When he takes away property He says, Be property to those poor ones.

. . . . . .

Then, again, he must be pure in *principle*. Here he is at once beleagured by an army of corruptions.

He may be thrown into circumstances where good principles are not current, where he loses all unless he is willing to lower his high moral standard.

Corrupt men say to him, "You cannot sail this sea of life with all these things on board; they will not bring you anything in the next port; nor are they even good for ballast on the way. Your principles must be thrown overboard if you expect to navigate these waters. Policy is my principle; expediency is mine; success is all the principle I want."

But, looking up to God who holds the winds in His hands and can silence the loud-thundering seas, He says, "No! I cannot stain my soul with these corruptions. I will trust Him. It were better to go to the bottom in mid-ocean, and have my good principles as a soft pillow upon the cold hard rocks of poverty, than to come into port without them, and have my soul eternally impoverished." And God replies to him out of the serene heavens, "Keep yourself unspotted from the world."

HEAVEN WITHIN.

. . . . To live, therefore, for the *spiritual* part of our nature, is to live for the future in the truest and fullest sense. So that we need not always be looking forward through the unfolding of time, to meet the requirements of the principle we are considering. It is enough if we take our nature, as God gave it to us, and treat it as he meant us to treat it. Eternity is within us. The hereafter is now in your soul. Heaven is in your heart—or ought to be, and might be. He that hath the Son of God *hath life!*

The bush in your garden has now the rose in its sap; give it time and it will blossom.

The red apples of next autumn are not to be imported and glued to the boughs of your orchard; the life-currents flowing through the fibres of the trees are making them to-day. All this hydraulic power in the roots, and all this atmospheric action in the leaves, is working for the future. They are laying up treasures for winter.

The lily, rooted in the mud, is pushing its long green stem up through the water of the pond, to lay its pure and fragrant heart in its heaven of sunlight and summer air. Its future and its blossoms mean the same thing. . . . . So of man; his bloom of goodness, his fruit of manhood, this is his future, for which, during these years, he ought to be living. Never was there a grander and truer maxim of human economy, I think, uttered in the ears of man, than this :—" Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven." . . .

THE HEAVENLY CHORUS.

. . . . This rural night scene near Bethlehem is one of remarkable beauty, both in its outline and in its details. He who has never passed a night in the open fields does not know what night is at all. It may be related some way to the night in a great city; but I think you would never suspect it.

These artificial lights that flash along our streets, dissipate that deep shade which hovers close upon the ground in the country, and brings out the brilliance of the stars. We hardly know or think whether there are any stars, shut in between rows of houses, with long lines of gas lamps flashing in our eyes. And then the roar and rattle of the pavements, the dissonance of a great crowd of people packed closely together, the sense of being surrounded by a throng, the whole beehive or ant-hill idea of life, are enough to make night a very artificial and unpoetical kind of thing.

But night in the country! with its vast and solemn stillness, deepening away into the solitudes of valley and hill; the great, voiceless silence brooding everywhere, from the sky to the forest; save when a wandering breeze rustles the leaves on the trees, or some bird twitters in its dreams, or screams in its nocturnal flight; or there is the murmur of a stream, droning its mountainous song, as if it were the mother of rural life, singing her lullaby at the cradle of all living creatures; this is the night as God thought of it in His idea of the universe. . . . . On such a night as this, two thousand years ago, upon the Syrian fields near Bethlehem, there were angels flashing down out of the sky with celestial jubilates, that astonished certain shepherds who happened to be there looking after their flocks.

Suddenly this heavenly chorus filled the vast rural solitude and silence with their radiant presence and enchanting song. The shep-

herds listened amazed. They would have been awe-stricken had there been a shower of meteors, such as sometimes glitters through our November nights.

But here was a meteoric shower of angels, all bursting out into rapturous singing, and those rustics were overwhelmed with astonishment and fear ; they trembled before that silence that had suddenly become populous and voiceful. Just as most of us would, I suppose, if the invisible world were to flash instantly upon our sensuous light.

But, in the midst of their amazement and alarm, the Angel of the Lord soothed them with the announcement of "Good tidings of great joy." There was no occasion for fear ; it was the most glorious night that ever shot star-beams down upon the face of the earth. All heaven was so flooded with joy that it could not but overflow ; the angels were so happy that they must fly near and sing in the ears of men. And you will notice how naturally all those heavenly voices take on poetical forms of utterance ; the occasion is too vast and glorious for mere prose. I think the poetical element in human nature, which is so generally smothered by the hardships and anxieties of our earthly life, will blossom into wonderful beauty in Heaven. I imagine there will be poets there, in comparison with whom the world's Homers and Virgils, Dantes and Shakespeares and Miltons, will be stammering children. . . . . .

THE CROSS WITHIN THE CROSS.

It seems not to have been enough for those bitter-hearted crucifiers to drive their nails into the quivering live flesh of the hands and feet. They were not quite satisfied with the spectacle of physical suffering. And so they took their nails of insult, their spikes of mockery, and drove them with the hammers of hard and cruel words, deep into the finest sensibilities.

There was a cross within a cross, upon which Jesus was then and there hanging. The exterior and visible one held in mid-air His tortured body. Everybody in the crowd gathered on the top of Calvary could see that.

But there was an invisible cross, upon which the sensibilities of His divinely sensitive nature were being crucified at the same time. There was a Cross upon which His heart, His soul, His spirit hung. And I think we cannot understand the Crucifixion till we come to perceive and appreciate this part of it.

The sneers, the laughter, the ridicule of the crowd : the indifference of some, and the malicious contumely of others, must have been harder to endure than all the pains of the perishing nerves.

. . . . . .

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified! What is that? Is it a schoolboy's theme upon which he will write an experimental oration? Or a topic whose sum and substance will be exhausted by a ten-page essay?

Is it something that a preacher can write as a motto on the first leaf of his discourse and be prepared to declare on the last that he has given you a fair idea of it? Or, if he places it at the head of a thousand orations, can he presume to say at the end of them *all* that he has finished his subject?

Why, sometimes thinking of the marvelous inexhaustibleness of this theme, I would summon all the angels of God to come and speak of it; to tell of His glory in the heights above, and of the love which led Him down to us; would give every star a voice to recount what they know of Him in the unwritten ages; would put a tongue in every leaf and flower about the globe to sing of His divine power and beauty and goodness; would cite the ages to pass and tell what they know of His love for man, His patience, His consolation; would have Gethsemane and Calvary and the sepulchre rehearse their knowledge of this wonderful Being; would make the very clouds vocal which He clave when He ascended from the earth breathing blessings upon the disciples as He went home to prepare them mansions in the skies.

If all those who have gone over the dark river and up the shining heights could come back and tell us what *they* know; and if all Christendom and the world to-day could pour into our ears all the life and peace and joy, all the strength and hope and consolation which have flowed from Him, even then the bulk of this theme would remain unexpressed and inexpressible in a deep silence which we could not break. . . . . .

"WHAT HAVE THEY SEEN IN THINE HOUSE?"

. . . . A royal palace is more honorable than the residence of a private citizen, not simply because it is of greater dimensions and more elegant in its architecture, but because a king lives in it. And a house is more honorable than a barn or a den, because man occupies it. Temples receive their sanctity from the in-dwelling God. And next to the Temple, or God's house, is man's house, because in this world humanity stands higher than all other things next to God.

The house, therefore, derives its honor and its sanctity from its human occupant. Within it is life; not the life of a rose or an oak, of an eagle or a lion, but of man. In a word, what the house is for

and is good for is to inclose and shelter a *home*. Men have manifold treasures of estate, of coin, of jewels and plate, of works of art; but there is no such treasury as the *home*.

And when the question is asked, "What have they seen in thine house?" the true answer is—a home. Of this home, now, let me say a few words.

What are the treasures of your home? Father and mother are the proprietors, and they have their treasures. What are these?

The poorest and most valueless thing you can find on the trees anywhere is a last year's bird's nest. There is nothing in it but some dry leaves and an old feather or two. Nobody cares anything about it, although it was built with painstaking and according to a plan drawn by the Divine Architect himself. But a nest with hungry birdlings in it! *that* every humane person respects, giving it care and deference. And the same is true of the human habitation. People may fill their houses, as they often do, with every beautiful thing for the gratification of a refined taste, with pictures and statues, antique vases and rare books; but every sensible person cries "Amen" to the Roman matron when she says, pointing to her children, "These are my jewels."

No parent will deny that the home is sanctified for the sake of the children. As Jesus said of his disciples, "For *their sakes* I sanctify myself." And every father and mother, who has any adequate notion of parenthood, understands what this means, "For *their sakes* I *sanctify* myself."

It is in God's order that parents *live for their children*. . . In this department of education the lesson of *self-denial* is made comparatively easy. . . . . .

But, after all, parents never know what their children are to them till they *are gone*.

They who have been called to look upward through their tears after the angel-flight of a departed child's spirit, know and appreciate what others cannot.

More than any *saint's* day in the calendar is that day of sunbeams struggling with the gloom of night, *remembered* by *so many* when the *baby died*, or "when our little *son* or *daughter* went to Heaven."

How many are counting time from the year of their *bereavements*, as well as from the year of *Our Lord?* It is only uttering what almost everybody believes, to say that home is the most sacred place on earth. For it is, at the same time, a Temple of God and the shrine of humanity.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

* * * * And so, entering the inmost circle of Christian sympathy, this truth becomes intense. *It is something* to me, my

brother, that you have sinned; that you are now under the press of severe temptation, and know not how it shall issue; that God seems to have hidden His face from you; that great afflictions have fallen upon you like bursting storm clouds; that you are in the dungeon of despair; that you are entrapped in doubts; that you are weak, faint-hearted, lonely, weary, ready to fall by the way. Look up. For these things are something to the hearts of your real brethren. They are weak with you. They are enkindled against that which has offended you. It is something to me, my brother, that you are advancing in the Divine Life; that you are becoming more and more like Christ; that you are coming continually upon the heights where new views of his love and beauty burst upon you. I hear with joy your new songs; and you drop great words upon my ear, out of which fresh meanings break upon my soul, making me strong and glad.

And I would not give you any of my weakness; but would share always with those weaker than I, and exult with you who are stronger, following you with prayers and benedictions, and feeling the magnetism of your example as you ascend toward your Father and my Father. So says every true sympathetic Christian soul.

Thus do Christians come into the closest unison and fullest harmony, so close that heart touches heart, beating quick and true responses. There is no more isolation, no more self-seeking; but all is outward, communicative, self-sacrificing, suffering with each other. And now lift up your eyes and see how it is in the universe. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Such sympathy flows down to us from those lofty and sinless beings nearest God. But higher than all, immeasurably, open your hearts to understand the sympathy of our blessed Redeemer.

Brood over it till it fills your soul, and then see how sublime a thing it is to resemble him in this. He carries in his heart the world with all its seas of woes and mountains of burdens. Be like him in your measure. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye *have done it unto me*."

JOY.

Some people regard joy in religion as the sugar coating of a poisonous pill, only a hiding of temptation. But Satan likes nothing better than to allure Christians into hermits' caves and monkish cells. He would persuade all Christendom, if he could, that joy is a crime. He finds the heart too wide awake for him when it is rejoicing, and hence tries to draw it into a soporific gloom.

Joy is a Christian privilege—a Christian duty. When we are enjoined by the word of God to be *sober*, it does not mean to be stupid or sleepy or glum. The word translated sober means to be watchful, having all the faculties awake, in a healthy activity. Sobriety is not inconsistent with joyousness. Dignity is not marred by joy. Honesty always shakes hands heartily with joy. And to crown all, we have the command by divine inspiration—"Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice."

Do not understand by this that sorrow is excluded. By no means. It must come. Hearts that have grown together in love must be torn asunder. Nor will this occur without the cry of anguish. And the scar of the wound may remain visible upon the heart forever. But all this does not forbid or destroy joyousness. There is joy in the hope of re-union where there will be no more separation. There is joy in all the sweet remembrances of the past, and ground of rejoicing in the divine blessings of the present hour.

Losses, troubles, disasters must come. But they should no more really quench joy than passing clouds extinguish the sun. Roses must bend and shake in the pelting storms that pour roughly from the black cloud hanging above them; but when the rain is over they are sweeter and more beautiful than ever; and the very drops of the storm that still linger on the leaves flash like diamonds in the shining light.

So may the Christian heart endure the storms of life. The Sun of Righteousness is behind every cloud of sorrow.

And this joy should not be transient and occasional, but constant and habitual. It should not only ring out from the bright summits of such days as this, but should be perpetual chimes ringing through the months and years.

Such joy as I have here commended is far removed from the senseless hilarity of empty glee. It is the joy of serious, honest, earnest, affectionate souls, mighty in the battles and the peace of life. It has ocean depths unfathomable. And, as the ocean rolls its sublime anthems forever along the resounding shores, whether swept by the hurricane, or bright and glassy in the summer's calm, so may joy pour its ceaseless hymns upon our hearts. Above all let it be joy dropped into our souls from the melting love of Christ; to whom be praise and glory and dominion eternal. Amen.

GOLDEN VIALS.

. . . . Your heart is a censer—love to Christ is the fire; and when it is kindled your prayers, like clouds of sweet incense, float up to God, and are treasured in golden vials. This is the beau-

tiful and touching imagery by which this subject is set forth in Revelations. Whatever is precious, delightful and affecting is employed to present the beauty and preciousness of sincere prayer. . . .

Prayer is a compound fact, or, if you prefer it more exactly, it is a fact presenting eight sides—an octagonal fact. These have received the names Invocation, Adoration, Confession, Petition, Pleading, Dedication, Thanksgiving and Blessing. . . . . We are still in a state of discipline, probation, education. All our moral faculties are weak and our spiritual capacities undeveloped. Love will not grow, faith will not grow, gratitude and obedience will not grow, without exercise. The heart of man is a garden, and prayer is the gardener. It plucks up this noxious passion weed, and that injurious sprout of appetite; straightens this young shoot of love that is beginning to grow crooked; ties up with cords and bands of strengthening that drooping branch of faith. All the while, of course, the trust and ground of hope is in the sunshine and showers of the Holy Spirit. . . . . Our Heavenly Father is, and should be held to be, our most intimate, dear, tender and sympathizing friend. This shyness which men feel toward God is neither reverence or natural awe; but it is the want of confidence. And it will diminish just in proportion as they commune with Him intimately, freely, honestly. . . . . Love is the divine atmosphere in which the soul finds God. And prayer is the sweet, the divine embrace.

THANKSGIVING.

. . . . But the day comes closer to us, and looks more lovingly into our eyes around the hearth-stone. Do you not remember those blazing, crackling, roaring old fires down in New England, when this day comes around with its cold atmosphere and its driving snows, shutting you into this warm, beautiful place here? Now we have, perhaps, in modern architecture, dropped out this element, altogether too much of a physical fact, but yet, let us have such good cheer and such joy in our homes, that there shall be there flames of kindness and of love and of good will, sufficient on every hand to the joy of our hearts. That is what we want to make it for children. What a blessed day! Let us enwreath this day with garlands and hang it in the memories of our children, so that when we are gone to that land of everlasting thanksgiving, they shall remember it, and say, what a bright, beautiful and joyous day it was when father and mother were with us. . . . . It is as a household reunion that many of us especially cherish it. With what bright and fragrant recollections does it come down to us from the past! Grand-

fathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, old and young, the cradle and the big arm-chair, all melt into one blissful vision of memory.

So let it ever be! It is a jubilee, and God, the loving Father of us all, smiles upon the bright and happy home, which He himself has constituted and blessed. Let the fragrant incense of loaded tables fill the room; only see that God be thanked as the giver of these bounties. Let joy be in every heart, and pleasure sit smiling on every face.

As a people we especially need just such a day. We require it for relaxation from the severe duties of a busy life. We are too much like bows always ready for the arrow; we need to unbend. There is danger of breaking or losing that elasticity which is necessary for efficiency in life.

And we shall not be in much danger of desecrating the day if we remember its origin and purpose; if we suffer all things to remind us of our Divine Benefactor and Friend.

When our tastes are regaled by the fruits of the earth, let it be recollected that there is a God of nature who gives us our daily bread. When the fire glows upon the hearth, forget not that God prepared that coal, ages and ages ago, for your comfort. When your eye rests upon some miniature flag of the Stars and Stripes, think of the God of nations who gave our fathers this glorious land, who founded the noble institutions in which we rejoice, who has led us by a faithful hand and brought us to this day through wonderful deliverances. When you look upon that sweet and precious child that God has sent to your home from heaven during the twelve months passed, remember the gracious Giver of this best of blessings, and if you must look into an empty cradle and fold your vacant arms, as some are called by Divine Providence to do, lift up your eyes and see that your home reaches into Heaven, and that the cloud which looks so dark to you is bright with celestial radiance to your angel child, who sees the other side; and while your joy is tempered by a sorrow that you cannot forget, rejoice in the faith and hope of an eternal day of union and blessedness in the Paradise of God. And may we all receive impressions from this day that will be to us as if angels had spoken to us. As those who walk in gardens of fragrant shrubs and beautiful blossoms pluck a handful of choice flowers, which they carry with them out into the rough and dusty road, and ever as they go upon their journey inhale the delicious odors, and delight their eyes with the beauty of the blooms in their hands, till they forget their weariness and beguile the tedious hours, so may we bear with us from this day memories and impressions that shall remind us of the garden of God's goodness and love, and breathe fragrant pleasures upon our hearts along the remaining journey of our life.

GOD WITH THE PIERCED HAND; OR SOVEREIGN MERCY.

. . . . If we desire to behold mercy in its resplendent glory, royal among attributes, enthroned amid qualities, we need to look at it in God. The Divine mercy is an everlasting admiration, and must be peculiarly so to us who are its most favored objects.

And we need, moreover, to consider mercy on the background of justice. For it is like the rainbow that can never be seen except on the retiring darkness of the thunder storm. When John, amid his apocalyptic visions, beheld the throne of God in Heaven, he saw the rainbow round about it; that was the dazzling and unapproachable throne of Divine Justice, tempered to human sight, and made accessible by the beautiful symbol of mercy. And when that mighty angel descended from heaven, garmented with a cloud, whose countenance was like the mid-day sun which we cannot look upon, and planting one fiery foot upon the sea and the other upon the land, swore that time should be no longer, lest the vision should be too terrible for mortal sight, he wore a rainbow as a turban upon his head in token of mercy. And thus always does the Almighty Ruler of the world wear about Him the bow of mercy to soften the terrors of His majesty. Were it not for this, we who are His guilty subjects would never dare to look upon Him. Without this, our God would be a consuming fire; but the flames of His justice come to us strained through the prism of His mercy. That which is a beam of blinding brightness falls upon us in the manifold beauty of the mercy spectrum. . . . . Calvary means mercy accomplishing the essential ends of justice. Instead of smiting the human race with the sword of eternal justice, God in Christ suffered His hands to be pierced on the cross. . . And thus the same hand that stretches the plumb-line of justice upon the world, and that holds in its Omnipotent grasp the sword of retributive judgments, is pierced for the redemption of the human race. It is, therefore, a pierced hand that is henceforth laid upon this sunken world to lift it up to glory again. It is, indeed, a red right hand; yet it is not red from the gore of slaughter, but from its own deep wound. And as this mighty hand of mercy is laid upon the tilted axle of our wandering moral world, to bring it back to its orbit of holiness, its blood-drops, falling upon the stains of human guilt, wash them all away. . . . . And now it is the pierced hand of God that is laid upon every man in his individual career; upon you and me, my friend. . . . . It was the pierced hand of God that took your babe out of the cradle the other day, weeping mother; that tore your gentle wife from your fond embrace, desolate husband; that laid low your manly brother, disconsolate sister, and your noble and dutiful son, most bereaved and sad-hearted widow. You may have thought it a gauntleted hand, heavy and rough with iron severities smiting in

cruelty; but it was not so. Had your tears and cloud of grief permitted you to see clearly, you would have beheld in that hand the print of the nail out of which the blood of mercy was dripping. It is the pierced hand that demolishes our fortunes, thwarts our mistaken plans and disappoints our foolish expectations; foolish indeed! although we deemed them wise enough. And there is nothing that can so reconcile us to these adverse experiences of life, as the distinct perception that the providential hand that controls them bears in its palm the bloody wound of the nail which fastened it to the cross. The crimson seal of mercy tempers the most severely written decree of Providence. . . . .

THE UNUTTERABLE.

. . . . Prayer, then, is personal communion, between the soul of man and the soul of God, in the daylight of consciousness. And this may employ human language in its utterance; or it may be unspoken thoughts and feelings. There are times in every Christian's life, no doubt, when, in prayer, words fail, and the soul exhales itself to heaven, as the rose breathes forth its fragrance into the summer. And these are moments of illumination—of transfiguration—when we are girded up for the descent into the sorrows and toils of earthly life.

No man understands the glory and liberty of prayer, who has not sometimes cast away from him the staff and crutches of words. Are there not love-glances, that have in them deeper and larger meanings than could be crowded into any prepared sentences of speech? Are there not moments when even human affection can do nothing but gaze in adoration and grow tremulous with the electric thrill, in the reciprocities of loving hearts?

. . . . . It sometimes happens that men accomplish such distinguished works in the world as to justify and secure a biography, written either by themselves or their friends. But no man's inner biography was ever yet written. There have been those who have kept religious journals, who have put on record an account of their daily spiritual life, or the main incidents of such experience; but that is a very different thing from sitting down to record every thought and emotion without reserve or limitation. No man ever yet kept a diary of his closet-life, and kept it faithfully and honestly. It is impossible; though there are days when the transactions of this secret life might be expressed in words, there are many other days when language is utterly impotent. There are hours when the soul in loftiest mood and under the highest inspiration, is caught up into the third heaven, and hears that which it is not lawful to utter.

There are hours when the soul falls down before the presence of the Lord, crushed beneath the load of conscious guilt, when all words

die upon the tongue, and only mighty agonies, voiceless to the ear, but heard by the Divine Father, fill up the sacred moments. There are times when we come before God in solitude, clinging to the last hope of life, as a shipwrecked mariner clings to the plank in the waves ; and our souls seem to ascend with the strength of an angel, in our desperate condition, and stand right in the presence of the Almighty. Yea, our hands lay hold of his feet, and we will not let go until his blessing falls upon us.

The transfigurations of the soul ; the agonies of guilt ; the groans of a burdened spirit ; the mighty wrestlings of despair ; who shall write these in a book ? There is thus a vast unwritten history of the closet, the world has no knowledge of it. It cannot be found in the libraries. But up there before God in Heaven it is all preserved. And who knows but part of our entertainment in Heaven shall be the journal of this wonderful literature of unuttered prayer. . . .

CHRISTMAS GIFTS—HUMAN AND DIVINE.

. . . . The only kind of giving that fulfills the true idea of it and deserves the name at all, is that which is the real outflow and expression of good will and affection. Whatever is destitute of this heartiness and candor, whatever goes forth from the hand without the royal seal of love upon it, is not a *gift* however it may be labeled.

The hand alone is not competent to make a gift, neither can the head confer that competency upon it. The heart is the giver. Those only are real *gifts* that have this origin. Money cannot buy them. Gold must say, "It is not in me." Diamonds and pearls, houses and lands, must reply, "It is not to be found in us." Gobelin tapestry looms cannot weave them. No fingers can learn the cunning of making them save in the school of good will and kindness.

And there is a delicate shade of difference between *gifts* and *presents* that deserves to be noticed. These terms are not so exactly synonymous as they may appear to be. In one sense a gift is a present, and a present a gift ; but a nation is photographed in each of these words—the Saxon in the one and the Roman in the other. Simplicity, heartiness and frankness in the one, and a ceremonial politeness, that affords a cover for hollow formalities, in the other. Fashionable society, with exquisite etiquette, may exchange presents, but open-hearted and sincere friendship asks nothing better than plain-spoken gifts.

Such gifts as these are prisms that spread out the white light of life into the beautiful colors of the spectrum. We make our acknowledgments of this truth in a variety of ways, and at all the most sacred

angles of our experience. We dismiss the bride from her nuptials to her new home with tokens of love and friendship, each particular friend laying some offering in her hand. The universality of this custom of making bridal gifts proves it to be something founded on a principle in our nature. It is not a mere form that somehow began and now continues simply because it once had a beginning. But it finds a response in the human heart; just as we gather flowers in certain moods, when nothing but roses and honeysuckles and such sweet and beautiful things can interpret and express our feelings. And we love also to give gifts to memory. We hang our garlands on the pillars of the past. We crown our anniversaries with chaplets, to vivify our recollections and continue through the succession of years our pleasant associations. We separate our birthdays from the rest, and signalize them by gifts that keep them warm and bright in memory.

They who allow the birth-day anniversaries of their children to glide by unnoticed, going into the calendar with no badge or mark upon them, neglect a rare opportunity of gilding and sweetening the cup of enjoyment. To celebrate these natal days as they may be, puts a golden spoke into the wheel of the year that brightens the whole revolving circle. Blessed is that family that has a calendar well studded, not with saints' days, but with anniversaries! The Catholic Church no doubt vastly enriches the devotion of its members by its days consecrated to certain saints. To be sure, it breeds superstition and diverts attention from other and better things in their worship, nevertheless there is a fundamental truth involved in the system that keeps it alive and makes it so absorbing and controlling. But in the household, if there are no saints' days, there may be sons' days and daughters' days, father's days and mother's days, when the hum-drum of time shall be interrupted by domestic holidays, starred and gilded with gifts and celebrations. We shall have drudgery enough, and blank days enough, and worldly weeks enough left to satisfy anybody, after we have consecrated these special days and done it liberally. These are the little drops from the cloud of life that weave the rainbows round our children's homes.

And the same principle holds good when we pass into the larger sphere of the great family of Christendom, that is daily spreading its circumference to include by and by the vast family of mankind. The grand anniversary day in this family is commonly called Christmas.

Some people object to a recognition of this day, because we are unable to declare positively that the twenty-fifth of December is really the day. And some are shy of it, because it comes to us with the church-mark of Roman Catholicism upon it. Others still are afraid of it, because they discern the possibilities of superstition in it.

Nevertheless the day continues to be celebrated, and so far as my observation goes it comes round each succeeding year with a few

more flowers on its head, and a few more gifts in its hands, and a little more music in the sound of its footsteps; and I don't know what it will come to in a hundred years, but love to think it will by that time pour a hundred-fold broader and deeper stream of good will, of light and peace and blessedness into the dark and aching bosom of human society. I hope it will yet be the brightest day in all the year, for whose sunrise millions of mankind will watch and wait, and climb mountain tops to catch its earliest beams, and hang eagerly around its sunset loath to lose its parting ray. . . .
I fear nothing that turns the attention of the world to Jesus. I know He is so loving and good, so glorious and mighty to bless and save, that if the whole world can once get into his arms and recline upon his bosom, there will be a millenium for man, and I have no objection to let even scoffers and unbelievers know that this Saviour, whose advent we hail with such gratitude and joy, was once a babe, and helpless as any other babe, in the arms of his virgin mother. This was God's best way of coming to man for his redemption; the best way of disclosing the fatherhood of the Almighty Creator; and when the highest, yea, the perfect philosophy of human life is so finally learned, for one I am quite sure that this infancy of Christ will be in entire harmony with it. I have no doubt that the time is coming, when the exquisite scene of the nativity, painted by Raphael and Corregio and so many other artists, of the Madonna and child, as they are technically called, will be recognized as embodying the wisdom of wisdoms.

Our Puritan ancestors rejected Christmas because of the associations which it had in a corrupt form of christianity. They wished nothing from the church which they deemed Anti-christ. And if Christmas now could be shown to be Anti-christ, for one I would have nothing to do with it. It may, indeed, still retain trappings and appendages of superstition, but these can be stripped off, leaving the substance sound and good. And is not this wiser and better than to undertake to wrap the whole up in one great bundle, label it Babylon, and cast it into the bottomless pit? . . . .

But there is one particular feature in our observance of Christmas which I am now considering. It is the prevailing and extending custom of making this the annual day for the *interchange* of *gifts* among friends, and especially in the family. Nothing, as it seems to me, can be more appropriate. Better far than on the opening day of the new year. I sometimes wish we might have a genuine Ecumenical Council of Christendom, getting representatives of the various branches of the Christian family together, in a friendly and cordial spirit, and by universal consent move Christmas forward one week, so as to make it the golden clasp to bind the circle of the year. On that clasp of the months I would like to see the name of Christ engraved. And thus causing all time to begin and end in Jesus'

birth-day, we might open every succeeding year with that overture of angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Yielding for one day at least to the sweet spirit that Christ has breathed upon the world, we might fortify ourselves with gracious charities, and humane dispositions, heavenly tolerance and saintly gentleness, for strifes and bitterness and hardness that come drifting, in cold vapors and obscuring fogs, up through the northerly gorge of the world's rushing and foaming stream of life. For one day we might stand facing each other as brothers in our common humanity, and give gifts — in the memory of him, the beloved and ever-blessed elder brother, who as returning conquerer rose to his throne above the highest heavens, and gave *gifts* unto men.

But letting Christmas stand precisely where it does, it is a beautiful custom. How many families throughout the world were made happy yesterday by the interchange of gifts. How many children have walked all this Sabbath-day in a kind of trance, as if they were in some fairy land, and were treading enchanted ground by reason of yesterday. What pictures of marvelous, blazing, gift-fruited Christmas trees still dance before their enraptured fancy. . . .

I am chiefly anxious in all these features of our observance to bring the thoughts and feelings of the little ones to their best friend; to have them understand and realize continually, and more and more as life advances, that all good and beautiful things come from Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem. And so all the excellent influences of giving, and all the good fruits of it among us may be definitely connected with the Saviour of man. Along this clue may we not trace our way back to the infinite benevolence and charity of God.

. . . . . .

In one aspect of it the entire career of Christ, from first to last, is an expression and interpretation of giving. The Father gives his Son; the Son gives himself for the welfare of mankind. . .

But we have other things to give besides these gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh—or what these stand for and represent.

There are to be gifts of kindness, of charity, of sympathy, of peace, of patience with one another; those beautiful blooms and fruit of the Christian heart, that honor their author and adorn humanity. We are to let these visible gifts of Christmas time be but the symbols of these higher gifts that ought to make our life blossom and sparkle throughout the year.

It seems to me a beautiful thought, however it came into the minds of former centuries as a notion and belief, that at the birth-day of our Lord all malignant spirits were rendered harmless for the time.

Their malice had no power during those sacred hours. A mightier than they had come, to whom they must yield.

As Milton gives it in his Hymn of the Nativity—

"Nor war or battle's sound
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung,
The hooked chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew the Sovereign Lord was nigh.

And looking to the consummation—
Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow; and like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall."

Let us open the gates of our hearts to this Prince of Peace. Let us lay our gifts of love and loyalty at his sacred feet, and then bending together give each other justice, kindness and fraternal fellowships.

"THE OLD IS BETTER."

This was spoken concerning wine. It was an illustration derived from the fact that this beverage is improved in its flavor by age. The Divine Teacher said, what everybody knew then and knows now, that men prefer the old wine to the new, because that which has age is better.

This is one of our Lord's parables; one of those wonderful sayings, simple and easy enough on the surface, but having such a depth of meaning as to seem dark when you look down into it. It is like a well that shines on the surface with the light of day; but as you peer down into its depths, grows so dark that by and by you see the very stars.

Jesus applied this parable to the Jews, as being so blindly attached to their ancient ideas and institutions that they had no taste for the new gospel. Judaism, through the medium of Moses and the prophets, was good enough for them; they did not wish to try Christianity.

I propose, now, to apply this same principle to certain things, more especially within the scope of our modern thought. In anticipation of this, let me remark that wine is not a true representative of all things. It is not true that everything improves by age. You can think of a hundred things which are made worse instead of better by time. Indeed, no fact of observation is more common than that years have a power to waste and destroy. To grow old signifies to wear out, to lose strength, beauty, vitality—yes, to get ready for the final departure. Even though we may be no poets, to moralize on falling leaves or fading flowers, we all say, in our practical style, that time dries up the sap, takes out the color. November undoes April. The months do not improve the gardens in the quality of beauty. In the single element of color, no doubt, the autumn leaves are more beautiful than summer foliage. But this beauty is only the flash of the sunset of vegetable life. The most brilliant part of the day is when the sun stands on the western horizon getting ready to leap into the gulf of night. . . . . .

There are hints and suggestions all through nature of a kind of gladness, in view of what we call death.

The *sunset;* the *autumnal foliage;* the *smile* erasing from the face the expression of suffering. . . . . .

A kind of true gospel in the inarticulate nature, making signs to men. . . . . .

But this is all transient. On this midwinter night you cannot find the gay October woods. After dark you do not expect to find anything left of the gorgeous sunset.

No, these flashes and passing splendors of the terminal periods of existence do not invalidate the statement that time wastes, decays, exhausts the fountains of life and loveliness.

On the tall old family clock in the hall, there is a figure just above number 12 on the dial. You recollect how it looks: A skeleton with a huge scythe and an hour-glass. That is the orthodox conception of Time. While the slow sands are dropping from the upper glass into the lower, the grim skeleton mows his desolate swath. And there is real basis for such a notion as this. Time does swing a scythe, sharp, relentless, wide-cutting, through the fields of the world. Ripe grain, blooming flowers, noxious weeds, all go down together, and lie drying and fading under the summer sun.

In the conceptions of most people, Time prefers an old house, loves to make his home among ruins, listening to the pensive cadences of crumbling walls that are music to his ears. He has special fondness for Egypt, the Euphrates, and Pekin; but turns his back on America.

To be sure, time is new as well as old—modern as well as ancient. But the term here is used rather in the sense of antiquity, to express

that which has been left behind in the race of years or ages. And the immediate point now is, that this antiquity does not treat everything as well as it does wine.

As a general rule, we do not specially admire dust and cobwebs. They are signs of age, no doubt, as well as evidences of neglect in housekeeping. And dealers have been known to borrow these symbols of age, putting them on their casks and bottles, to make the late vintage have an ancient and venerable look. And probably there are few better illustrations than this of the folly of a blind adherence to mere antiquity.

There are thousands of people who are resting their faith simply on *dust* and *cobwebs*. . . . . .

What I would ask you to consider, then, is that age is *venerable* not in *itself*, but only by what it may fairly be supposed to *represent*.

As a rule, an old garment is not so good as a new one—at least, the majority of people prefer the new. An old printing-press has no advantages over the new one. But rather, in such instances as these and a thousand similar ones, age is reckoned detrimental.

An old man with his snowy locks, shrunken figure, bloodless face and trembling limbs, may be an object of pity rather than veneration. It does not happen to be true, unfortunately, that all persons grow venerable as they advance in years. Whether this venerableness is acquired or not, depends upon something else besides years. For grey hairs are an infallible sign neither of wisdom or righteousness.

Mr. Dickens, with his remarkable genius, has delineated the bad possibilities of old age in the repulsive character of Grandfather Smallweed—withered old age consumed by the fires of avarice; an old man hugging his money-bags on the brink of the grave. There pou have the dust and cobwebs with nothing to correspond.

But when age represents such facts as growth, maturity, ripeness, fruitage, character, reputation, and position, then does it, indeed, become venerable.

Childhood is a good thing to begin with; an excellent point of departure. But it is precisely what God designed to have us leave behind. He rolls the years forward for this very purpose. He launches and puts us out to sea on the voyage of life, whether we care to set sail or not. Time and tide do not wait for the inclinations of children. Youth, maturity, age, these stages are pre-determined in the laws of astronomy and physiology. He who should struggle to remain young in years, would have the stars in their courses fighting against him.

Now, if there be real growth, genuine maturity, the ripening of character, and the well-tinted fruitage of reputation, with the circling suns and seasons, then it is surely well to grow old. All this is not

in the dreary direction of the miserly Smallweeds, but of the Samuels of Judea, and the Johns of Patmos and Ephesus.

In all the galleries of history have you ever seen any figure more venerable than the Apostle John, the beloved disciple? Outliving his brother apostles, outliving his contemporaries, looking into the young eyes of later generations, growing wiser, nobler, purer, gentler, manlier, with every added year; wondering many times over the meaning of those strange words of the Master, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"—dreaming, perhaps, if it really means for him earthly immortality, as he lives on in the long sunset of his life, never able to get below the horizon, till at last, as if a little weary of this waiting, he exclaims, "even so, *come*, Lord Jesus, quickly." It is impossible to not venerate such a man as that. Age glorifies him. The years are sculptors for him.

And in how many homes, in the easiest chair and the cosiest corner, sits one who renders womanhood venerable by her grandmotherly loveliness! The charms of her youth are gone; one kind of beauty has disappeared, but another and a higher has taken the place of it, till you cease to regret the lost tint from the complexion and the gloss from the hair. It is the beauty of the harvest, the glory of autumn.

I never know which to admire most, the young dandelion holding up in the fresh grass its cup-full of the sun's fire; or with its downy seed-globe, so thoroughly refined from every thing dross, so immaterial as to be almost ethereal, and so delicately poised on the old stem as to seem undecided whether to float away through the air or remain. And I have seen men and women grow old in the same manner. Certainly it is possible to have such a product from the growth of three score years and ten.

What is thus true of the individual human being, might be true of the nations, and under the love of Christ is to become true of the race. In the progress of the race *ideas* grow old. So do *laws*, *customs*, *creeds*, and *institutions*. If you go to India and China men can show you wonderful antiquities in these things. And millions of men revere and cling to them because they are old, rather than for any other reason. This, to-day, is the grand obstacle to progress among the millions of China. They are so rooted in their antiquities that you cannot stir them without breaking up the whole system. The Chinaman quaffs the old wine of his ideas, laws, customs and institutions, and says, "These ancient things are good enough; they are better than anything new! these make the Celestial Empire—the new is barbarian."

Now a good idea is good, whether it is old or new. It may have the antiquity of the pyramids, or may be as recent as the last silver mine in the Sierras. The ideas of Plato are no better than those of Herbert Spencer because they were in the brain of the great Greek more than

two thousand years ago. Otherwise Confucius is more to be revered in his teaching than Christ. . . . . .

The same principle applies to the most sacred and important of all ideas and institutions. I believe it is very natural for men to revere a religion that is old. And no doubt there is something desirable and valuable in such a tendency. It is for the human mind what the mechanical use of roots is for trees, to keep it from being blown about by the constantly shifting winds of discussion.

But he who chooses his religion, or his religious ideas, simply on the ground of age, does a very unreasonable thing. No doubt there is a presumption in favor of a religion that has long existed. For we believe error to be temporary, while truth is eternal. But how long does it take error to die? Possibly a hundred or a thousand years more would bring that to the grave which flourishes to-day. That which was believed in the third century may be exactly as true as that which is believed on the same subject in the nineteenth century; but it is not true simply because good men held it 1500 years ago.

. . . . . .

The only safe position, as it seems to me, is to search for the truth. Let that be the pearl of great price. Brush off the dust and cobwebs, and see what is within. Count nothing venerable except what is true, good and worthy. Worship nothing because it is old. Crown no men kings because of their grey heads. . . The true king may be a young man.

Christ was never anything but young. The priests and the senators who condemned him were men of hoary heads. . . .

But it was the mistake of the age and nation, that they would have nothing but their old Mosaic wine.

We are living in a time of wide discussion of our religious creeds. It is important that we *steady* our faith by *sound principles* of *thought* and *discussion*. . . . And so, that creed is good which has borne a fruitage, that has nourished the souls and fed the lives of men. That religion is venerable which has had a benignant growth, upon which the passing ages have hung a sweet and generous ripeness. I do not ask you to accept the religion of Christ because it is now almost 2000 years old, but because during these ages it has been the friend and benefactor of man; because it has blessed society, purified institutions, elevated nations, refined civilization, and honored God; because it is the way of life to every soul that will walk therein. . . . . .

And now we stand here to-night, on this solemn border land, between the old year and the new.

How good has the old year been? How good in your estimation? Has it been as good as it might have been?

Have you and I made it as good as we might have made it?

Shall we not rather reverse the text to-night, and say "with the help of God, the new year shall be better than the old?"

On such a dividing line as this we find an excellent opportunity to change our course, if need be, in the navigation of the future.

In three hours the midnight bells will ring out the knell of the old year. . . . . .

"Ring out the old, ring in the new;
Ring happy bells across the snow;
The year is going—let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor;
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old;
Ring in the the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Yes, let this Christ come into your hearts and mine, with all his wealth of love and wisdom and grace. Then shall we be new men and women—and shall make the new year glorious by a radiant newness of character and life.

ROUNDS FROM "THE LADDER OF LIFE."

Thus step by step we go
To our eternal state.

ROUNDS FROM "THE LADDER OF LIFE."

THE BEGINNING.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." *Gen. i. 1.*

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *John i. 1.*

"All things were made by Him." *John i. 3.*

God alone is without beginning. He is the uncreated, eternal Being. There is a genesis for the universe; but none for Him by whom all things have been brought into existence.

And we who have begun to exist, tracing our origin back to God, reverently and thankfully recognize Him as our Creator. He is the fountain of the river of life, in which we are but individual drops commingled. Without our choice or forethought have we begun to flow in this wonderful stream of being. Days, weeks, months, and years have we swept on down in this ever widening and deepening channel. Whither?

Life is glorious. It is a pearl of infinite value. To have been born; to have begun to be; to take an individual place in the vast and endless procession of existence; this is something to awaken the warmest gratitude. A grain of sand on the shore of the sea; a leaf in the foliage of the forest; a star in the glittering Milky Way; these are all worth naming, but they are as nothing compared with a human soul.

Having begun to exist, therefore, with all the glorious possibilities of my nature, I begin here and now to consider life seriously. Lifting up my thoughts unto my creator, I undertake, with His help, to live toward the Divine Idea of my being. Eternal Father, begin anew to bless and guide me as thy frail and sinful child.

Let this day become for me the beginning of a better and higher life.

THE ALMIGHTY.

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty." *Exodus vi :* 3.

"The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his name. Great in counsel and mighty in work." *Jeremiah xxxii :* 18, 19.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." *Rev. i :* 8.

In thinking of God we necessarily conceive of Him as possessing unlimited power. He who is the Supreme Being must be Almighty. And this divine attribute of Infinite Power is one that offers great comfort and encouragement to all who desire to be good. As the child rests and shelters himself in the consciousness of his father's strength, so do God's children repose and hide within His power. The Lord is our Rock, our Refuge, our Strong Tower, our Shield. As the young bird finds a safe retreat under the wing of the mother-bird, so do we under the overshadowing and enveloping power of God. Our weakness forgets itself beneath his Almightiness. We can do but little, but with God all things are possible. Good souls through all the ages have found unspeakable consolation in the Almighty. To take self for support is to stand on a plank in mid-ocean; to rely upon God is to have the solid continent beneath your feet. They only need fear the power of God who do not love Him and obey His commands. To such He must appear as irresistible in his might and terrible in his anger. But to all others he is the Almighty Lover, unlimited in strength and infinite in affection.

My soul, make thy home in the bosom of the Almighty. With the Omnipotent arms embracing thee, rest in peace and joy upon His heart, and fear no ill. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee." *Exodus xxxiii :* 19.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." *Ps. xxxiii :* 5.

"There is none good but one, that is God." *Matt. xix :* 17.

When Moses desired a disclosure of the Divine Glory, Jehovah replied to his bold request that He would manifest His goodness to

him. And accordingly in the solitude of the mountain summit, the Lord, descending in a cloud, passed before the prophet proclaiming the essential benignity of his character.

And precisely this is the element of Divine glory that mankind need to discover. Not so much the glory of power, or of wisdom, or of majesty, as the glory of kindness. Goodness belongs to the very nature of God. He doeth good as naturally as the sun shines, or the cloud sprinkles down the showers, or the fountain pours forth a stream of water. He has packed the planet full of the evidences of His kindness. His royal goodness moves in everlasting procession throughout the year. It glimmers at the dawn, glows at noontide and flames in manifold splendor at sunset.

His goodness provides for my bodily wants, and his loving kindness for all the needs of my soul. His goodness makes God patient, gentle, gracious, forbearing, helpful. It bears and forbears with the obstinate transgressor in order to give him time to repent. Within it lies the secret of God's amazing patience toward a world of evil doers.

As the atmosphere envelops every breathing creature, so does the goodness of the Lord enfold me body and soul. Open my eyes, O Infinite Goodness, that I may behold the glory of thy kindness. Cause it to shine upon my heart as the sun shines on the fields in spring.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

"And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." *John i:* 16.

"For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." *Roman v:* 15.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 *Cor., xii:* 9.

"By grace ye are saved." *Eph. ii:* 5.

As a foundation for our hope, we are more concerned with God's attitude toward us, than with ours toward Him. We love him because He first loved us. Spring comes, not from the soil of the earth, but from the sun in the heavens. The first movement toward the salvation of mankind proceeds from the heart of God.

What, then, is the Divine attitude toward us as sinners? It is one of willingness, readiness, even eagerness to help and to bless. We have not to propitiate the Divine favor; that favor exists and abounds not only to fulness, but to overfulness.

Everything in our salvation depends upon the grace of God, and that grace is declared and displayed in Jesus Christ. By grace ye are saved. Gratuitously does God provide the way and the means of redemption. We cannot buy it, nor work for it, nor procure it by any merit of our own. Our attitude is simply and purely receptive. for God gives, we take. And this Divine grace is not merely a match sin; it superabounds and surpasses all guilt. As the ocean receives and buries in itself all the streams of the globe, so the grace of God engulfs all the sins of humanity. John Bunyan recorded his religious career under the title, "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners."

By the grace of God, therefore, I am what I am as a Christian. Every step heavenward is through grace. And no difficulty, no trial, no suffering, no temptation, no peril, can arise in my path so as to vitiate the word of the Lord. "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Help me, O gracious One, to receive, day by day, grace upon grace, even unto the end.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." *Ps. ciii:* 11.

"His tender mercies are over all His works." *Ps. cxlv:* 9.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us." *Eph. ii:* 4.

This quality of the Divine Character stands related especially and directly toward moral offenders. God sympathises with the poor, the afflicted, the suffering, the weak, but is merciful toward those who have sinned against Him. And so, as all mankind are guilty of wrong-doing, the Divine mercy is disclosed as something most wonderful and most precious to humanity. Justice demands the execution of the penalties for law transgressed. Mercy waits to be gracious, furnishes deliverance, offers forgiveness, restores the Prodigal, saves from destruction.

Mercy, therefore, is the key-note of the Gospel.

What the soul, terrified by its sins, needs is a merciful God. Hence the Lord proclaimed His mercy to Moses, and the devout saints of the elder times rejoiced in the disclosure. They said and sang, "His mercy endureth forever." It is the rainbow on the broken storm-cloud in nature, and it is the Bow of Glory encircling the apocalyptic Throne in Heaven. From the Deluge to Paradise humanity marches under this glowing arch of Divine Mercy. Jesus comes as the embodiment of it, and the whole world is bathed in the attempered light.

As a sinner I look up for a God of Mercy; and behold he smiles upon me out of Heaven. My sins vanish like sun-smitten storms. The clear day shines. Sinai, on the distant horizon, is buried under clouds, upon which I see the unbroken seal of Mercy's Rainbow.

Under thy tender mercies, O wonderful God, I live, I hope, I rejoice with joy unspeakable.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

"God is love." 1 *John iv:* 8.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *John iii.:* 16.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Rom. viii:* 38, 39.

O, the love, the wonderous love of God! Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians, that it "passeth knowledge." The dimensions of it are too great for measurement by our limited capacities. To have a revelation of it made to the human soul, is like the giving of sight to a blind man. It transfigures the whole aspect of life. To have your thought fly heavenward toward the throne of Divine Majesty, and power, and glory, and then discover that not God's Sovereignty, nor his Almightiness, nor his wisdom is most characteristic of Him—but that *love* is—how it illumines, and warms, and lifts the soul! How many there are who have no other idea of God than as the Supreme Being, exercising universal government, with His power to

execute justice on offences, upholding the world by His power, and sitting in judicial severity, without tenderness or sympathy, on a dazzling and awful throne of judgment. But the conception of a God, whose very nature is love, how remote is this from their thoughts! And yet this is plainly what the Scriptures affirm. God not only exercises the emotion of love, but he is love itself. This is the supreme attribute. It is love that created the world, that made man in the Divine image and likeness, that exercises universal providence. As it is love that explains the care, the toil, the patience, even the discipline of the human household, so love explains the whole of God's doings in creation and providence.

You are a Christian—or desire to be. Remember that it is your Lord Jesus Christ that has revealed unto the world this most glorious and vital truth that God is love. Go day by day, through sunshine or through storm, thinking, believing, knowing that God loves you with an affection that is as real as your mother's love, and that nothing can ever possibly change or destroy. To know this, to realize it, to have such a sense and assurance of it as we have of the love of father and mother, husband and wife and child; to live under the summer light and warmth of the perpetual consciousness of it: is not this what all Christians need, and what many lack? Without it, piety must be more or less formal, cold, unsatisfactory, without joy, a routine of duty, even many times irksome drudgery, cheered only by the hope of a Heavenly reward. Without it, religion is the service of a hireling; with it, the trust, and love, and devotion of a child, to whom obedience is a delight. Love enthroned above all principalities and powers as the Ruler of the Universe; love dispensing the events of daily providence for mankind; love ordering all the incidents and accidents of my individual life, leading me step by step, as the parent leads the child just beginning to walk —this is the revelation of God in Christ. Blessed is he to whom the knowledge of this truth has come, thrice blessed he who is walking day by day in the light and joy of it. He need not sing

> "Jesus, lover of my soul,
> Let me to thy bosom fly;"

for he abides consciously in that bosom of everlasting love. The billows and storms of trouble can never reach nor disturb him.

THE GENTLENESS OF GOD.

"Thy gentleness hath made me great." *Ps. xviii :* 35.

"Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." 2 *Cor. x :* 1.

"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." *Isa. liii :* 7.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." *Isa. xlii :* 3.

We are so accustomed to see authority and power exercised with hardness and severity, that we find it difficult to realize that the Almighty can be gentle in His Sovereignty. This quality of gentleness is allied to meekness. It implies a mild disposition, a spirit of kindness —the opposite of everything hard, severe, coarse, unyielding. It is that subtle, but real element that distinguishes in human character the gentleman and the gentlewoman. The world has never greatly admired this trait of character. The heroes of history and fiction do not possess it. Jesus taught it as an essential quality of the New Man, and in doing so confirmed the truth that it is an attribute of the divine character. Paul declared gentleness to be one of the fruits of the spirit. The Spirit of God in the human heart produces it.

The idea that God is a being of gentleness is peculiar to Christianity. It is connected with the greater and broader truth that God is Love. It is a revelation designed to give hope and courage to mankind, and to present the true type of manhood. It is notably characteristic of Christ, who is the "image of the invisible God."

Our guilty consciences overcloud this glorious truth. Our sins contrive to persuade us, that God must be always sitting in judgment against us. We have transgressed and deserve the penalty. He is just and holy, and can do nothing else but inflict the merited punishment. He possesses the power, and is bound to maintain good moral order and government. How can he be gentle?

And yet David discerned the Divine attribute. Jesus disclosed it with a splendor of revelation that should kindle the hopes of mankind, and draw all men unto this Infinite mildness that shares the throne of the universe with eternal justice.

Behold the throne of God and of the Lamb!

My heavy and fearful heart, look up! Take courage. Be of good cheer. Dread no thunderbolts from an angry God—only *go and sin no more.*

THE DIVINE SYMPATHY.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." *Ps. ciii:* 13.

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous: the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow." *Ps. cxlvi:* 8, 9.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." *Matt. xxv:* 40.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." *Heb. iv:* 15.

"Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you." 1 *Pet. iv:* 7.

When, in the course of our earthly experience, we enter into the dark cloud of trouble, this question presses the mind for an answer—Does God care?

He who endures pain, whether physical or mental, instinctively longs to know whether his sufferings in any way affect God. There are many who in this experience are very much troubled and bewildered because of the apparent Divine indifference. Nature, through which God operates and manifests himself, seems to be utterly regardless of our sufferings. In our agony of heart or body, we cry out and lift our eyes heavenward; but no voice is heard; the serene sky seems to smile as if there was no such thing as anguish. The penalties for violating the laws of nature are inflicted inexorably. Every day this truth is impressed upon our minds.

And so we come to feel as if God does not care for our suffering. We are as nothing in the vast universe.

Behold, now, the riches we have in such a revelation of God as the Bible furnishes.

Nature evinces intelligence; no doubt there is mind back of all phenomena, but is there a heart? Is there anything in the Divine nature corresponding to human emotion? Yes! In spite of the coldness and reticence of God's nature, it is *true* that He is infinite in compassion. If the life of Jesus on earth is to be taken as developing the Divine character, then God is inconceivably sympathetic. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, because of the heartache of his friends. May we not believe and say, that our Father in Heaven weeps with

us in tears, and rejoices with us in our joys? A human mother may cease to care for her babe, although an instance so rare as to be hardly supposable, but God cannot fail to sympathize with us.

Believe it, O my heart; believe it, thou who art in trouble, who endureth sufferings, to whom the heavens seem shut up; who dost groan in anguish, and crying out for help art left alone to bear the pain. Though you hear no voice, and the helper comes not, know and believe that God does care. Are not the very hairs of your head numbered? Are ye not of more value than sparrows? "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

But it is through faith that the comfort of this truth must be received; the foundation for it is the word of God. Hold fast upon that.

According to your faith it will certainly be unto you. Abba, Father.

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

"He is mighty in strength and wisdom." *Job xxxvi: 5.*

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." *Ps. civ: 24*

"His understanding is infinite." *Ps. cxlvii: 5.*

"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" *Rom. xi: 33, 34.*

"Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 *Cor. i: 24.*

"To God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever." *Rom. xvi: 27.*

Wisdom, as a mental quality, is something more than the capacity for knowledge. It implies sound judgment, a faculty for adapting means to ends, for adjusting the parts of a complicated whole, for contriving and arranging so as to accomplish the most desirable results. That God is all-wise this marvelous material universe most plainly declares. "The heavens declare the glory of God"—that is, the glory of His wisdom. They who can see a personal Creator in the skies and upon the earth, discover him to be possessed of infinite wisdom. All the sciences of matter and mind offer their testimony to the same fact. The same is true in Divine Providence. There has never been a blunder in the administration of God's government. Sin is not a

mistake on His part, not a surprise, not an advantage gained by His enemies through an oversight or lack of wisdom in His plans. Even this deep and dark mystery of moral evil, which our finite thoughts cannot now compass, will some day disclose the infinite wisdom of God. Now if God be all-wise, how ought we to confide in His plans for us, as being the very best possible? To follow a leader distinguished for his discretion and sound judgment in planning a campaign, gives the soldier a confidence that keeps his mind in peace. Knowing that there will be no blunder, so far as the Divine arrangements are concerned, how securely may we meet all the events of life! Exigencies, that are like mountains of trouble before us, are not a baffling of Divine wisdom. Faith in an All-wise God can uproot them and cast them into the sea. When your plans are thwarted; when you are cast into the blazing furnace of sufferings; when bereaved of those you love, whose departure brings the midnight down upon you, and you can discover no reason why it should go so hard with you; then plant your heart on this truth, that Infinite Wisdom has ordered precisely this experience as the very best for you.

The wise mechanic does not spoil his work. You may be on God's anvil, where blow upon blow seems to be crushing you into a shapeless mass; but remember, he is thus by those very blows forming you for glory and blessedness. Not a blow falls amiss. Events are not accidents; they are links in the chain that the wisdom of God makes, wherewith to bind us to Himself and Heaven. Be of good cheer, therefore. Do not try to plan a life for yourself. Go to God and ask Him to do it for you. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

LECTURE

ON THE

FUNCTION OF IMAGINATION IN THEOLOGY.

THE FUNCTION OF IMAGINATION IN THEOLOGY.

It will be neither inappropriate to the occasion nor presumptious in me, I hope, in venturing to speak before a society that bears the distinctive title of Rhetorical, to offer as a topic the *The Function of Imagination in Theology*, for it may be assumed, I suppose, as well-established, that this mental faculty is not alien to the department of Rhetoric; and the object proposed is to show that it is, also, not foreign to the Divine Science.

It would not surprise me, however, should somebody feel impelled to forbid these bans on the ground that the parties are utterly and hopelessly incompatible, and upon this account I must ask your indulgence, while attempting to give the imagination a reputation and character that may warrant so high an alliance. How it has come to pass that the good name of this intellectual faculty is so beclouded by suspicion, I am not able exactly to tell you, although the fact itself will doubtless be readily acknowledged. Possibly it may be due to popular misconceptions of the faculty itself; and it would not be strange if it should turn out that not a few misdemeanors have been unjustly attributed to Imagination while the real culprit still skulks in the neighborhood unwhipt of justice.

But, in any case, is it not true that this faculty has been made to bear the odium of all sorts of shams, delusions, dreams, and vagaries? Is it not commonly supposed that there is a phantom world, somewhere not very far away from the real world, which is populated by the progeny of the human imagination? And surely to be the progenitor of such a goblin race is quite enough to ruin the reputation of almost anybody or anything. Although even high authorities in metaphysical science gravely assure us that this mental power is responsible for the fairies, the Centaurs, fire-breathing dragons and similar monsters, I cannot avoid the suspicion that this is really a slander, and that somehow the actual parentage has been overlooked.

You perceive, therefore, that before we can arrive at any mutual understanding about it, we must resort to explanations.

What part of the mental constitution, then, is it to which the term Imagination is to be applied?

And in seeking an answer to this question we shall naturally appeal to the oracles of mental philosophy. What response do these give?

They seem, indeed to be oracular enough ; at least in this, that they are sufficiently contradictory, or out of concert with each other.

For the most part, the imagination has been treated conjointly with other faculties ; and often in such a manner as to leave it largely undistinguished from conception, abstraction, association, judgment, and taste. Mr. Ruskin became so thoroughly disappointed and unhappy in his study of this subject that he declared, speaking of this very difficulty, " Unfortunately the works of metaphysicians will afford us in this most interesting inquiry no aid whatsoever." You may regard this as very strong language, and, I am willing to admit, even unwarrantably strong ; but, at the same time, it is due to Mr. Ruskin to say that he had great provocation. Is it not certainly true that this faculty has never yet been fully delineated, its outlines in the mental constitution not very definitely drawn, and its functions not always distinctly perceived ?

In a matter, then, possessed of such inherent difficulties, and amidst such diversities of authority, it will not be remarkable if one not a metaphysician, and who offers no claims to special illumination, should fail to extricate the subject from all its entanglement. Indeed, permit me to say candidly that I come with no such great expectations. But at the same time, and on this very account, should there not be indulgence for anyone who turns his attention earnestly in this direction?

Now, one of the chief sources of confusion appears to me to be found in not distinguishing sufficiently between Imagination and Fancy. These terms are used interchangeably, at least in popular speech, and often as if exactly equivalent. And you will find, even in the writings of metaphysicians themselves, not infrequently, a similar use of these two words.

But if they are really different, wherein does this difference consist ?

Let me venture an answer : that Fancy has to do with the outside, concerns itself mainly with the surface of things, while to the Imagination belongs a penetrative power that reaches the inside and deals with the substance of things. And in order to find the ground for this distinction, let us go to the words themselves—their etymology.

Fancy, or Phantasy, as it is sometimes written, is derived from the Greek word *φαινοσ*, which signifies to shine, and so to become visible to the eye. It is thus an appearance, a phenomena, an apparition, a glimpse, that seems to be specially declared by the word. There is really no more of substance in it than there is in ghosts or phantoms. And this very word phantom has the same origin ; it is moonlight on a crag, the shadow of a tree upon the water-mirror of a placid lake.

Imagination, on the other hand, as a term of language, traces its

origin to the old Latin root-word *imitor*, which signifies to imitate, to copy, to counterfeit, to image. And this idea of image expresses such a resemblance as implies, primarily, substance ; there is in it something substantial, and not merely an appearance, as is the case with phantasy. The notion of similitude belongs to both of them ; but in Imagination the likeness goes beneath the surface and lays hold of that which is within.

According to this primitive meaning, images were statues or busts ; that is, something real and solid, which resembled the original object, not simply in external appearance, but also in certain substantial qualities.

Take, as an illustration of the real meaning of the word image, this historical fact. Among the ancient Romans, those men who had attained to the highest dignities of civil position, thereby acquired the right to transmit to posterity what were called their images ; that is to say, their busts, which were preserved in a hall devoted to that especial purpose. So that a man who had the good fortune to possess, lawfully, images of this sort, was entitled to the rank of nobility. These busts, being the permanent representatives of a noble ancestry, were accepted as evidence of aristocratic blood in the veins. They were not, you will observe, paintings or engravings upon a flat surface, although these would have represented the ancestral features and forms, but they were solid statues, being the truest resemblance to the human figure.

The Imagination, then, is not satisfied, except it reaches even to the verity, except it actually resembles and so presents reality. It cannot be a mere appearance, a likeness on the surface ; and therefore cannot be employed to represent the unreal or the false ; but the Fancy, on the contrary, being a matter of appearance, having to do with the outside, is not supposed to present any necessary verity. That which shines like gold, may be gold, and again it may not be ; it may be only a wash, the thinnest possible covering to some other metal, but Fancy takes it for reality, and asks no questions, having neither the disposition nor the habit to concern itself with anything but the outside. And a Roman Parvenu who had attempted to buy rank with wealth suddenly acquired by some lucky venture or speculation, fitting up his ancestral hall with sham images, representing no actual lineage, would soon enough have found that his so-called busts and his consequent nobility were both the products of fancy ; he would have ranked as a fancied and not a real-imaged nobleman.

Nothing of all this, however, need blind us to the fact, that Imagination is capable of being perverted from its legitimate uses ; precisely as reason, judgment, or any other mental power ; but it remains, nevertheless, in its very nature, a truthful faculty, which phantasy is not.

And hence it is permitted Fancy to create fairies, ghosts, nymphs, and goblins, without becoming untrue to itself; for it does not stop to inquire whether these things are actual or not, but only whether they are possible and conceivable.

To announce, therefore, that Imagination is the faculty which joins a human head to the body of a horse, in making a Centaur, or that combines a woman and a fish into a Mermaid, would seem to be an unjust accusation; for how can Imagination do such a thing, seeing there is no substantial original from which to make a copy or image? Imagination is, indeed, the creative faculty, according to some of the metaphysicians themselves, who, with this very definition on their lips, go right on to say that it produces such monstrosities as these. But can a Centaur be *created*, in any correct sense, so long as a creation in this order of being, must have unity of interior life, which certainly there is not when one part is human and the other equine? Are we not rather to say that it is Fancy which is handy at all such grotesque carpentry in fable and fraud; while Imagination dignified, serious, truth-serving, and really creative, never degrades itself to such ludicrous shams?

Of course I do not mean to affirm that you will always find these two faculties so clearly discriminated in their operations; for they seem to be closely allied in nature, and often work together in producing results. In the domain of Art, for example, their products are not always separable; but they are by no means identical, nor even so nearly alike that they can exchange titles without producing confusion.

There is an intimate connection, also, between Memory and Imagination; for in the process that we term recollection, there are images presented to the mind. Dr. Maudsley thinks that "much of what we call memory is in reality Imagination." And he borrows from somebody the assertion that "fancy and memory differ only in this, that memory supposes time past, which fancy doth not"; and then proceeds to exclaim, as his own conclusion, "How much of our perception, even, is actually Imagination?"

We may admit all this to contain some measure of truth; and yet, because this faculty co-operates with others in their normal functions, it does not become necessary to confound it with them. Is not Imagination certainly distinguishable from both Memory and Perception, as it is also from Fancy?

The Imagination then belongs to the representative group of the intellectual powers, but, unlike Memory, it goes beyond experience, and unlike Fancy, it concerns itself with what is substantial and real, while, unlike simple conception, it embodies and vivifies that which it represents. Upon the one side it is seen to concern itself with the ideal, while upon the other it appears to be thoroughly realistic. An IDEA is something which the mind sees, the word itself, in its root

meaning, signifying to see; and it is the Imagination which has the power to render it visible, for one of its special functions is to concrete that which would otherwise remain abstract.

But we shall obtain, perhaps, a still better-defined notion of this power, if we place it in contrast with the logical faculty. Logic, at least so much of it as belongs to syllogistic reasoning, seems to be thoroughly mechanical in its nature. And those minds in which this faculty predominates, to the exclusion of Imagination, while they are apt to be slower in their movements, are commonly supposed to be the more sure and safe in their conclusions. Is it not true, however, that the world abounds with errors begotten of syllogisms? Are there not so many concealed pits in the premises, into which the truth may fall unable to rise again, as to render the results insecure?

The fact is Logic will accommodate you with almost any desired conclusion. A Trojan logician could have demonstrated, and doubtless did, that the city would be benefitted by admitting the Wooden Horse of Epeus. He may have made such an argument as this: "Horses are useful creatures; this creature at the gate of the city is a horse; therefore it will be useful to us." And the only defect in the syllogism was that there happened to be armed Greeks concealed in the hollow sides of the wooden steed. What logic needs, therefore, is the aid of Imagination to look through the shell of words, and see if there be no armed Greeks in the premises, whose presence may imperil the conclusion.

This representative faculty must perceive in order to correctly represent; and accordingly it is found to possess a penetrative ability which is peculiar to it, thus assisting, by this especial gift, the other powers, such as the logical, the mathematical, judgment and understanding. And so far from being dangerous to reason, as Hume, in his "Treatise on Human Nature," declares it to be, reason cannot get along at its best without it. What Mr Hume, however, seems to have had in mind, when he made that assertion, was Fancy, and not the Imagination, although he employed the latter term.

And in this modern era of Inductive Philosophy, that is to say, practically of Physical Science, many still believe that Imagination is a power, whose wings must be clipped by the Astronomer and Chemist. Prof. Tyndall, who ought to know, declares: "There are tories even in science, who regard Imagination as a faculty to be feared and avoided rather than employed." They had observed its action in weak vessels, and were unduly impressed by its disasters. But they might with equal justice point to exploded boilers as an argument against the use of steam. Bounded and conditioned by co-operant reason, Imagination becomes the *mightiest instrument* of the physical discoverer. Newton, passing from a falling apple to a falling moon, was a leap of the Imagination. When William Thompson tries to place the ultimate particles of matter between his compass points,

and to apply to them a scale of millimeters, it is an exercise of the Imagination. And in much that has been recently said about protoplasm and life, we have the out-goings of the Imagination, guided and controlled by the known analogies of science.

In fact, without this power our knowledge of nature would be a mere tabulation of co-existences and sequences. We should still believe in the succession of day and night, of winter and summer; but the *Soul* of *force* would be dislodged from our universe; casual relations would disappear, and with them that science which is now binding the parts of nature to an organic whole.

Mr. Buckle, likewise, in one of his essays, takes pains to elaborate the idea that the discovery by Newton of the great law of gravitation was under the guidance of this mighty faculty of the mind.

Because Heroditus, the weeping philosopher of Ephesus, undertook to construct his scheme of nature upon the basis of such assertions as these, viz., "Fire is the substance of everything," and "everything is fluid," some have said that it was Imagination improperly and dangerously inter-meddling with the affairs of science. But it was Fancy, and not Imagination, that misled the gloomy philosopher. For when he made what seemed to himself a grand discovery, viz., that "Fire is the universal substance," did he look into the depths of physical phenomena, or did he not rather catch only a glimpse of the glittering surface?

No doubt Phantasy will play the mischief even with grave philosophers, if they allow themselves too much confidence in this sportive Puck. But Imagination is a real prophet, going forth with them under the starry splendors of the skies, or out into the realms of nature all about them on this planet; and this grand prophet has the power so to open their eyes as to enable them to behold the flashing hosts of God's thoughts, invisible to the fleshly vision, marshaled upon the mountain of creation.

And thus, by not perceiving the nature of this faculty, many have condemned it as unfit to hold any place in the domain of philosophy, declaring the true method to be that which Aristotle gave to men, viz: observation of facts, and general principles deduced from them. As if Imagination itself did not legitimately deal with facts!

But do we not require the aid of imagination in understanding, selecting and classifying these very facts? This work certainly cannot be done adequately by the faculty of numbers; for thus would we get only a bare tabulation, like a census roll, or a catalogue of the names of plants.

Sir William Hamilton says: "A vigorous power of representation is as indispensable a condition of success in the abstract sciences, as in the poetical and plastic arts; and it may accordingly be reasonably doubted whether Aristotle or Homer were possessed of the more

powerful imagination." And yet the common notion is, that Aristotle was a man of predominant logical power, and that a poet is necessarily disqualified for success in science and philosophy.

In defence of the scientific value of the Imagination, President Porter says : "There is no danger to science so serious and constant as that from an over-weening tendency to abstraction, which fills the intellectual world with artificial hypostases, that have no ground in reality, and become the idols of their originator and those who constitute his school. Against this tendency there is no correction so effectual as the honest and hearty realism of a vivid and fertile imagination, when employed in the service of truth."

And all this applies even more emphatically, if possible, to the science of religion, as I hope to show.

There is much less need of speaking here of the function of Imagination in poetry and kindred arts ; except perhaps to remark that it is a narrow and false view, to suppose this faculty chiefly occupied with poetry, sculpture, and painting. There are many who speak loosely of literary productions, styling them imaginative, when really there is not a trace of imagination in them. The writer who spins a thrilling tale of passion and crime out of his heated brain, putting his persons into all sorts of impossible attitudes for startling effects, making his book an account of nothing actual in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, may call it a work of fiction, a novel, a romance, or whatever he please; but Imagination scornfully declines to recognize the bantling.

And Mr. Ruskin thinks this mental faculty has the good sense to abhor all falsehood. "Let it be understood once for all," he says, "that Imagination never designs to trust anything but truth ; and though it does not follow that where there is the appearance of truth there has been imaginative operation, of this we may be assured, that where there is appearance of falsehood the Imagination has had no hand."

We may say, then, safely enough I think, that this much distrusted faculty of the mind is not responsible for all the phantasmagoria of the world ; for it is not identical with phantasy at all, but a glorious, truth-loving and truth-discerning power. Neither is it an enemy to reason, but is heartily allied with it. The man who is endowed with it and keeps it in exercise does not, therefore, cease to think, and to think rationally ; but he thinks naturally through images, and on that account the more vividly, as well as to that extent the more effectively.

Let me observe, also, that Imagination seems to be of the very substance of Faith itself ; inasmuch as it is the power whereby mind lays hold of the intangible and invisible. What is it but spiritual insight in the higher ranges of its operations? If not what is technically called the Intuitive faculty itself, it seems to be so closely

related to that as to be really inseparable from it. Is it not the eye by which pure Reason looks into the depths of truth and sees the profoundest objects of human knowledge?

Faith has been declared by Mr. Morrell to be "the basis of all Philosophy." And he defines faith as "the direct intuitive reception of primary truth; the point in which the higher faculties and sensibilities meet." And at that point, as I conceive of it, you find Imagination upon its throne of power and glory.

II.

In the light of these distinctions and explanations, let us now proceed to consider more particularly the Function of Imagination in the Science of Religion.

And I shall speak of it first as related to the process of acquiring religious truth as an object of knowledge, and afterward as related to the act of expressing this truth; or, to employ technical terms, as related to exegesis and systematic theology.

For convenience of treatment theology is commonly divided into natural and revealed; the former referring to what we call nature, and the latter to the Bible, as a revelation in human language; although in a sense they are both Divine disclosures and neither of them *un*natural.

So far, however, as theology has to do with the material universe as disclosing Deity, it would seem that the function of Imagination must be recognized almost precisely as it is in physical science. Kepler rejoiced in the conception that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him. And when Newton reached the law of gravitation, soaring to it on the wings of his powerful Imagination, he found there a Divine idea and purpose. And likewise, I suppose, all of us, or any of us, who ever find God in his work will do so in much the same manner. Certainly the Mathematician will never reach him by any process of caculus; neither will the Chemist by his crucible and re-agents, nor the Geologist simply by his hammer and spade.

Is it not, also, precisely this reverent Imagination which the scientists of our day need to cultivate most diligently? Not merely the scientific imagination, but this faculty in its union with the spiritual and moral powers. It may, indeed, enable them to find protoplasm; but if they will only let this penetrative mental power work right on legitimately in conjunction with the highest intuition, it will enable them, also, to find God beyond protoplasm. Nor can I see how He will ever be found in any other way.

Paley's grand argument from design, cast as it was in the form of syllogistic reasoning, required the aid of Imagination to ascend to his sublime conclusion. "Upon the whole," he affirms, "after all the

schemes and struggles of a reluctant philosophy, the *necessary resort* is to a Deity. The marks of design are too strong to be gotten over. Design must have had a designer. That designer must have been a person. That person is God." But is this a conclusion that follows inevitably from the use of the syllogism? Is there not, rather, even from the topmost round of this ladder of logic, still a necessary leap of the Imagination, in order to reach the existence of a personal Deity? The utmost height to which the mere logical process could carry him would be, that the universe must have had a designer.

And the position of men of science at the present moment seems to be substantially this, as stated by one of their own number: "They have as little fellowship with the atheist who says there is no God, as with the theist who professes to know the mind of God." Which, being interpreted, means that they do not take the fact of a Deity at all into account, as investigators of physical phenomena. It may be said of science, as of the Evolution theory, it "does not solve—it does not profess to solve—the ultimate mystery untouched." In other words it does not undertake to answer theological questions. There may be a God and there may not; but whether there is or not does not concern us at the present stage of inquiry.

Professor Tyndall doubtless states fairly the position of those scientists who are farthest advanced towards a recognition of a personal Deity when he says, "But if the materialist is confounded (as to the origin of matter) and science dumb, who else is entitled to answer? To whom has the secret been revealed? Let us lower our heads and acknowledge our ignorance, one and all. Perhaps the mystery may resolve itself into knowledge at some future day." A time may therefore come when the ultra-scientific region by which we are now enfolded may offer itself to terrestrial, if not human, investigation. "And so from this region of darkness and mystery, which surrounds us, rays may now be darting which require but the development of the proper intellectual organs, to translate them into knowledge as far surpassing ours as ours does that of the wallowing reptiles which once held possession of this planet."

And certainly we ought to say that such a prospect as this furnishes considerable tonic for a languid hope. But *need* we wait in hope till the scientific Saurians of the Nineteenth Century have disappeared before a higher order of intelligence? And what exactly are those proper intellectual organs to which such mysterious reference is made? Are they not to-day a component part of the mental constitution of the Anglo-Saxon race? How *much* higher above the age *must we yet rise* before we strike this uppermost stratum of brains.

If men despair of ever reaching the conception of God through scientific analysis and synthesis, or through mere syllogisms of logic,

must they necessarily give up the whole question? Are there no other powers of the mind adapted to this special service?

The simple fact would seem to be that man is actually furnished with the required ability to penetrate within this "ultra-scientific region," of which the Professor speaks; and to descry stars in the darkness of this overshadowing mystery.

And it is to this very capacity or power I understand the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews to refer, when he defines Faith to be "the assurance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen;" this assurance being conditioned by these two things, viz., substance and understanding, as related to the objects of hope. Thus does this powerful faculty sweep its penetrating vision far on beyond the horizon of the physical eye.

What, then, is more certainly true than Professor Tyndall's declaration—"it is plain that beyond the present outposts of microscopic inquiry lies an immense field for the exercise of the Imagination"? And to the microscope we may add the telescope and the spectroscope, and say that beyond all these mechanical scopes, and also beyond the utmost scope of all the mechanical faculties of the mind, lies this wonderful field, waiting to be explored. And the men of science may enter that inviting field most hopefully and confidently, even as Columbus sailed away from the shores of Europe across the untraveled deep, bearing a new continent in the grasp of his Imagination.

Into that vast realm, so shadowy to the materialist, and even to the mere physicist, there are those who have learned how to enter, and with what sesame to open the door and possess the treasures. They will tell you in the current religious phraseology that it is the secret of faith. In other words, it is this mighty and far-discerning faculty of which I am speaking; not the mathematical Imagination, nor the philosophical; neither the scientific nor the æsthetic, but distinctively the spiritual, in which the highest intuitive reason blends with the representative power.

By this, in its honest and truth-seeking exercise, are we to find God in and beyond the tangible and visible. And when men have grown stronger in its use, as they will some day, then shall their convictions of God become so positive and clear as to fill consciousness itself; and then we shall have not a God suspended upon a syllogism of logic, or touched by the apparatus of the laboratories, or numbered out by the counted pebles of mathematics; but a spirit DISCERNED by a spirit, the Infinite approached by the finite.

III.

But there is still another revelation besides that of which I have been speaking, and this comes to us in the tangible form of a book written by men, and in human speech, as it must needs be.

And this book pre-supposes nature, recognizes its functions—even in theology—and proceeds to supplement it in certain particulars. This book, which we call the Bible, the student of Christian doctrine accepts as the basis of his religious beliefs, and the ground of his theological opinions. He begins to investigate these documents, given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and Divinely compiled, and finds that he is engaged in reading the words of a book. He requires no astronomical or chemical apparatus; and if he be honest-minded, as may be presumed, and of ordinary intelligence, the first question he will be likely to ask is, "How ought this volume to be read? Is it history, a philosophical treatise, a poem, a manual of science, or something else? What is its real literary nature?"

The thing to be clearly ascertained at the outset is what this peculiar book proposes to teach. Has it a theme? Do these three score or more separate books in one volume speak all to the same point, or are their utterances diverse and divergent? Are they simply bound together in leather and muslin by the bookbinder; or are they also bound in one by some indivisible topic, running through from Genesis to Revelation?

And if there be found precisely this one unbroken and infrangible thread of subject matter, somehow guiding the writers, beyond all possible conclave and collusion, over a period of 1500 years, then must there be such an authorship of the volume as separates it radically from all other known books. In other words, while men wrote the several documents, no man made the Bible; it is God's own Book.

We call it a Revelation, because it contains a special disclosure of the true God, maker of heaven and earth, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, revealing his paternal love in the salvation of mankind.

The subject matter of this book, therefore, requires us to reach forth in thought and conception beyond the boundary of the senses; it is a revelation of super-sensuous realities. So that the narrative, the biography, the lyric, the epistle, the discourse, cannot be comprehended except through this common medium.

You say, we are here dealing with verities, and not with fictions at all; with immutable facts rather than with hypotheses or theories. Exactly so; but, then, what kind of truth? mathematical, scientific, or moral? No doubt mathematics can help us somewhat; and so can grammar, and logic, and philosophy; but is not the chief matter before the mind moral truth of the highest order? And our success in reaching that truth must depend considerably, one would suppose, upon the use of the appropriate faculties of the mind.

The term "exegesis," which is commonly employed to express this act of interpreting the Scriptures, implies that there is a meaning within the outward form of the truth which is to be led forth into the

light of the understanding. But how is this meaning to be reached except by a right apprehension of the form under which it is presented? Language in its very nature is symbolical; words are only the signs of things. The earliest form of writing is that of picture inscriptions; and even those terms that are employed in the exactest sciences retain something of their pictorial origin and nature. And if this be true of the most carefully defined words, how much more true is it of the language of ordinary life.

Now the Bible was written in the dialect of the people; not in the culled and appropriate terms of the philosphers and scholars. And it was written, moreover, by men whose mental constitution was of the Oriental type. If God had waited till the year of our Lord 1643, and given the work of writing a Bible into the hands of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, we would now, doubtless, have a very different sort of book in its literary character. It would be in terms more logical, more abstract, more philosophical; would even appear to be more exact and clear in statement, and just to that extent would it be defective. The Anglo-Saxon race, no doubt, is a grand race, of powerful brains and stupendous energy; but it may be questioned whether, on the whole, they are capable of writing so good a world's Bible as the Orientals. And for one reason, at least, that the nature of the subject matter of the revelation requires a more intensely tropical style. As Prof. Murphy says, "The East is peculiarly addicted to the use of tropical language. Let not Western metaphysics misjudge, lest it be found to misunderstand Eastern esthetics." And God must have understood this from the beginning. To represent Him as a king, a rock, a shield, a man of war, a husband, as a father; as being angry; as repenting; as grieved; is not this, on the whole, better than to speak of Him as the Infinite, the Absolute, the Incomprehensible?

But however this may be, the Bible which we actually have does thus represent God, and our exegesis must, of course, take the fact into account.

The truth of biblical statements cannot, then, be brought out in interpretation by simply applying the rules of grammar to the passage under investigation; for the science of grammar may degenerate into a mere dead system of mechanical rules, even as Prof. Agassiz thought it had in our land and time; and whenever it does, you might as well try to analyze the contents of the human soul by chemistry as to secure the spiritual significance of the Scriptures by parsing the sentences according to the rules.

Let me not be misunderstood here as meaning to disparage the knowledge of language and of its science; but it necessarily holds a subordinate place and performs a kind of mechanical function. And do not the inspired writers themselves warn us earnestly not to literalize the Scriptures to death? "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The Rabbins used to tell the story of a worm, that had the power to shiver even the solid rocks. A most mighty and marvelous kind of worm, murmured incredulously the men of mere fact, the men of skill and sense. But they who first told the story did not mean a literal worm at all, but only the thunderbolt writhing down vermicularly in fiery zigzag from the sky.

And, in like manner, not a few of the original statements of the Scriptures, that were born of Imagination, have been buried out of sight under a dead literalism of grammar or logic ; the lightning becoming a mere worm, without power to flash the truth or rend the rocks of hardened hearts.

What, for example, can mere words make out of the opening sentence of Genesis : "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" ? In appearance it is simply a plain statement of some fact of matter. There is no metaphysical look upon the surface; there is no show of imagery in it any more than in the bare statement, "John once built a house." And yet what human intellect has ever begun even to reach the immense heights and depths of that wonderful declaration ? Try it with grammatical rules, with syllogisms, with arithmetic, and you can make almost nothing out of it.

It is only when the Imagination, touched into activity by this very suggestive language, lifts up its mighty wings, and, soaring, rises into the limitless regions of creation, beyond the boundaries of the planet, beyond the moon, beyond the sun, out into the fenceless fields of immensity, that anything like an adequate conception begins to dawn upon the understanding.

There are those who read the six days of creation as if they meant literally periods of four-and-twenty hours. "Does not the inspired writer say days ? And if he says days must he not mean days ? What can he possibly do with a book which does not mean what it says ?"

But, as everybody knows, this literal reading has collided with the modern geologists, who also claim to be literal; issuing thus in unhappy and unnecessary controversy, with mutual suspicions and some evidences of bad temper, amid much trembling of fear and panic of faith on the part of many believers in the Bible.

But by and by comes forward sombody with the sensible suggestion, "why not let the Imagination have a hand in this question, and see if it cannot discover some other kind of days besides the one measured by so many hours ?" And straightway a pleasant sunrise begins to dawn upon the whole matter, while both parties become calmer in spirit and wiser in understanding.

It was largely a question of the legitimate use of the proper mental faculties. And you are not surprised, therefore, looking back through the Christian ages, to find a man of superb Imagination, the great Augustine, clearly discerning the truth of this narrative of Genesis, as he did nearly fifteen centuries ago. There is probably no

poem in the world's literature, that demands more imperatively the exercise of this mental power in comprehending and interpreting it, than does the first book of the Hebrew Pentateuch.

It has been remarked by a learned traveler, that the paintings on the walls of the ancient ruins of Egypt furnish us a better knowledge of the people of those times and that land, their manners and customs, than we obtain of our Saxon ancestry through the works of modern history, although so much nearer to our own day; and for the reason, I suppose, that the picture fills out and completes the conception which ministers to knowledge, as mere words never can. The fact is that, in order most perfectly to understand, we must somehow see; and Imagination furnishes that mental vision whereby we penetrate the universe beyond the reach of the physical senses. There is an eye of the mind as well as of the body. And hence the Bible, which deals so extensively in its subject matter with the supersensuous, requires the Imagination to perceive and apprehend its meaning.

In his ingenious and instructive lectures on Sound, Prof. Tyndall introduced this experiment:—two stories below the room in which the lecturer operated stood a piano, and from this instrument a wooden rod, placed upon the sounding board, extended up through the floors, and rose above the platform of the speaker. The performer then struck the keys of the piano and played his selected piece of music; but not an echo of it reported itself to the listening audience. The deal rod perceptibly vibrated, but gave forth no sound. But now when the Professor caused a harp to be placed on the top of the rod, instantly the thrills that had been running up the silent wood found an interpreter, and the entire musical composition was rendered in the hearing of the assembly. The harp was needed in order to interpret the piano.

And thus it is with verbal Revelation; God's divine communications pass through the words of Scripture, but their meaning can be heard or perceived only by corresponding faculties in our own minds.

If we shall have the best interpretation of that marvelous literature, the Psalms of David, they must be put into the hands of a man like John Milton rather than John Calvin. And the great Hebrew singer will never be adequately Anglo-Saxonized till some grand Lyric Poet, full of the Holy Ghost, sets himself, or rather is set of God, to this special task.

Were not the prophets themselves of the order of poets? Seers were they called; that is, men who possessed insight; and insight when referred to the element of time becomes foresight.

Even Moses himself, although mighty in executive ability, and a master in the art of legislation, was also a poet of very high order.

And plainly no one can go through that part of the Old Testament, which sets forth the Jewish religion in its externals, and find the

meaning by the mere sensuous uuderstanding. All that system of sacrifices, of priestly functions and interventions; with altar and victim, blood and fire, outer courts and inmost sanctities, constitutes a kind of body whose soul is Jesus the Christ. They are the shadows while he is the substance; though strangely enough to the mere literalist the shadows were visible to the physical eye, while the substance itself required the inward vision.

And so, when in due time that Divine Sun, which, hidden from sight, had been shining all the while and casting these suggestive shadows before its real dawn, arose above the sensible horizon in Jesus of Galilee, there entered into the material of Theology what appeared to be a very literal and tangible element.

There stood before the world a man, bodied and facultied apparently like other men; and that man is an appointed revealer of God himself. We are therefore to comprehend him in order to obtain knowledge of the Godhead. And his disciples accordingly wrote biographies of Jesus, and laid the foundations of the New Testament Scriptures.

Before the modern Bible-reader, then, lie records which are apparently very simple. How shall we interpret them?

For 1800 years multitudes of the best minds have been reading and pondering these wonderful writings; but they are found to be like wells out of which twenty generations have been drawing without exhausting, and only to leave the water just as full, and pure, and sweet as at the beginning. Marvelous depths! somehow they must connect with the eternal fountains of truth! No surface pools are they; neither are they man-made cisterns of mere literal language.

When we read these small fragments of personal history, they will signify but little to us, except as they are brought distinctly before the mind by a vivifying and realizing imagination. Jesus at the wedding, upon the Lake, in the blooming fields, in the wilderness, in the Temple, alone at night upon the mountain, amidst the crowd of thronging invalids; sleeping, preaching, praying, healing; in Gethsemane, upon Calvary, in His resurrection body; the records are not long, but they are unfathomably deep in meaning.

How easy is it for us to get our minds and hearts stagnated in the mere words of these facts; till we hear little more in them than in the inarticulate wind among the tree-tops, and see no more in them than the child sees in its dull page of practising monosyllables! And one reason why we can read these wonderful biographies without having our souls set on fire with admiration, faith and love, is because we read so drowsily along the surface, while there is no adequate representation to the mind, such as only a spiritual imagination can effect.

Hence it often happens that a picture, printed upon some page of the Bible, though the work of no great artist, carries home to the understanding a fullness and definiteness of meaning that had been

altogether missed. Then, too, when we examine the teachings of Jesus himself, we find that it was His habit to speak in parables, in figurative rather than literal language, while the grand theme of His preaching was the Kingdom of Heaven—a phrase in itself distinctively tropical. He proceeded to compare it with a hundred other things that served as analogies. He only said it resembled these things, not trying to define it in the logical or philosophical method, as, I suppose, it was not ever possible to do. For literal language could not contain it, any more than Solomon's temple, with all its splendor, could contain Jehovah.

When He declared that His Kingdom was not of this world, the politicians, with Pilate at their head, could follow His thought no further; His speech passing thence out of sight for them, and so out of all intelligible meaning. Even James and John only blundered along after Him, stumbling in their sensuous understanding and thinking of official positions while He was referring to character.

And when He would teach the establishment of this Kingdom in the individual soul, He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again"; but the shy senator, with only his fleshly eyes open, could see nothing in that idea but an absurd impossibility—precisely what it is, if you undertake to handle it with any other faculty except the imagination.

In like manner again, speaking of the two-fold human destiny, Heaven and Hell, he put these momentous facts—as he perfectly comprehended their vast realities—under these forms of images; the one as Abraham's bosom, which nobody could think of taking literally, and the other a bad place of flames and torment, on the further side of an impassable gulf. But multitudes have read these sentences as if they were literal in sense, and thus have understood Hell to be an actual pit of real sulphurous flames. And yet what are these flames in the solemn speech of Jesus for, but to furnish for the Imagination material from which to conceive the even more terrible reality?

Or, upon the other side, when our Lord remarks to his Disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you," are we to think of Heaven as a place of house-keeping and real estate?

In conceiving of the final glorious estate of the righteous, as seen in Apocalyptic vision, under the analogy of the New Jerusalem, almost no one among us at least, would think of Heaven as really such a city, with walls of literal jasper, with sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, topaz and amethyst among the foundation stones, and with gates of solid pearl, while the streets are actually paved with pure gold. Such a conception might have attractions for all miserly and sordid natures, but myriads of others, and especially those who possess spiritual aspirations, would be likely to prefer some other pavement to that yellow metal, with which so many unpleasant ideas and memories in this earthly life are associated.

The fact is you can do nothing at all with the Apocalypse by the literal and logical method of handling. And he who goes into it in search of what many call solid fact—meaning physical and sensuous fact upon the surface—will make a more awkward failure than even the mathematician who should attempt the subjection of Shakespeare's dramas to the rules of calculus.

Or if you prefer to apply this principle to the Epistles of Paul, as being more definitely theological in style and form, you will not get very far away from the same conclusion. What but Faith, the Cross and Blood of Jesus, constitute the central themes of all his letters? And are verities like these to be handled at all by the sense faculties? The Cross that was erected by the Roman soldiers on Calvary is certainly not the Cross which we look upon or even care to see; for ours is glorified in the higher vision of faith and love, till it becomes more radiant to our Imagination than is that one, studded with glittering stars, which the navigator beholds upon the southern skies. And the Blood of the Lamb of God, so precious, so wonderfully efficacious in its sin-cleansing properties, so mysteriously intermediate between the sinner and the Kingdom of Heaven; shall we not begin to stumble at once and go blundering on into deeper confusions of thought, if we undertake to deal with that in the sensuous fashion of the ancient Hebrew Priests?

And so, from beginning to end, throughout this most marvelous volume of inspired writings we discover an ever-urgent demand for the proper use of the spiritual Imagination. I do not say that it sees everything, or supersedes the legitimate use of the other mental powers, but it does seem to me of much more practical value in the work of interpreting Scripture than is generally allowed to it.

For without it we are sure to fall into gross literalism, whose next step is into death to all spiritual conceptions and understandings; without it grammar and logic and dogma will be likely to tyrannize over the text and enslave it in the dreary treadmills of doctrine; without it the Biography of Jesus will become an alabastar vase, curiously wrought with all manner of mysterious inscriptions and symbols of deepest significance, but with no light shining through to reveal the hidden meanings.

Or are you afraid of Poetry? Be not deceived: real poetry is precisely as true and safe as geometry. Can you not find fiction even in logic and philosophy? In the laudable pursuit of knowledge you will arrive at no territory where error has not prepared its concealed pit-falls. To the student there is no pure land of knowledge, no primeval Paradise of truth, amid whose blooms and foliage and fruit the serpent-hiss of falsehood may not be heard.

Because you choose to emphasize reason, argument, proof and literal meaning in your theory and practice of exegesis, do not beguile yourself with the notion that therefore you are surely upon the royal

highway to God's eternal truth; you may be, and yet possibly may not be. The mind of him who searches the Scriptures honestly, and with a passionate love of the truth, must be opened in childlike docility—opened upward in reverent waiting for the voice of God, and with spiritual vision wide, to see the things which the Spirit may be ready to unfold to the soul.

Go into your library and select any book or series of books, if you can find them, which really set forth more of the substance of the Bible than is contained in the writings of the great Dreamer in Bedford jail. Is there less of truth in the "Pilgrim's Progress" than in "Calvin's Institutes"? The one is entitled a dream, and the other is called theology; one is born of the Imagination, the other is the product of the logical faculty; and it is just possible that the world will still be reading John Bunyan, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, when they have through broad latitudes forgotten to translate the institutes of the great Governor out of their limited dialect.

IV.

Permit me, then, in conclusion, to offer briefly a few suggestions touching another side of this topic, viz., the function of Imagination in the *Constructive Work of Systematic Theology*.

Not a little of that which has been presented already is equally applicable here; and I shall abstain from the repetition. That there will always be a demand for system in the science of religion seems to be a fact determined by certain fixed laws of the human intellect.

But just here it is probable that not a few will be most alert to suspect any such advocacy of the Imagination as I have now attempted. They will be likely to ask, What do we want of such a faculty in the serious and important business of settling the exact scheme of Christian doctrines? We are looking now for solid foundations, are in search of the immutable rock, and cannot be influenced or guided by the pleasant sentiments of poetry, that may be well enough elsewhere. This is a question of sound doctrine, of orthodox belief, and therefore does not admit of dreaming. None of your fine-spun fancies and mystical notions in such a matter-of-fact business as this; we must have fact linked to fact by the adamantine chain of logic, otherwise our structure will not be a secure place for the faith of a religious soul.

I will only reply, in general, to all such admonition, that logic itself, as has already been said, is not infallible; neither is it any more divinely inspired to furnish truth than is the Imagination. And, moreover, there is a mystical element inevitable to all true religion; a fact that we shall do well ever to carry in our memory.

The truths of divinity and immortality do not lie merely upon the surface ; there is always more of them than can possibly be written with any characters upon the outside.

In support of this position, it is easy to summon witnesses, many from the history of doctrine in the Christian Church. Let me offer you a single instance out of large numbers that might be cited.

Examine that memorable controversy of the Fourth Century, the noise of whose fiery debates has filled all subsequent ages with its echoes. The parties are headed on one side by Arius and upon the other by Athanasius. And in studying the mental constitutions of those two men, it will appear that the champion of the theory known as Arianism was defective in precisely this theory of which I am speaking. Neander remarks that, in him, "a tendency to narrow conceptions of the understanding, exclusive of the imitative faculty predominated." It was a tendency "to conceive everything in a manner altogether too outward and mechanical;" a tendency "which narrowly confined itself within the province of the understanding, which set itself to oppose the mystical and contemplative element, the element of feeling in theology."

And it is well known that his disciple Eunomius carried this tendency even much farther than it went with Arius himself. The historian characterizes this disciple by "an over-valuation of the logical development of the doctrinal conception."

Upon the other side, now, Athanasius maintained that "the expressions 'Son of God,' and 'divine generations' are of symbolical nature." And upon this pivot turned the whole question ; it was the sensuous understanding opposed by the rational Imagination. So that you perceive truth and error over against each other, not simply as having a petty quarrel about a single Greek letter, in the rallying cries of Homoousian and Homoiousian, but rather as a radical difference of spiritual discernment. The one party looked merely upon the surface and saw nothing but Arianism, while the other looked beneath, with a vision penetrating the form and symbol, and beheld the truth as it actually is in Jesus. And I suspect that those who have the inclination and the leisure to search the history of Christian doctrines in this direction will find abundant confirmation of this position.

In order to construct a system of belief, there must first be secured the truth, presented always under the condition of form. That which we desire to reach with our understanding is embodied in language. And, as Dr. Bushnell says, in his deeply suggestive style, "The principal difficulty we have with language now is, that it will not put into the theoretic understanding what the Imagination only can receive, and will not open to the head what the heart only can interpret."

It would be almost sufficient for this point, to have shown that the Imagination is absolutely essential in the interpretation of the Scrip-

tures. But now, having the material of theology on hand, brought out of the quarry and down from the mountain of Biblical truth, can the constructive forces dispense with the aid of this same faculty? One would think not; for the reason that the individual doctrines are to be known, not merely in and by themselves, but also and especially in their necessary relations to each other, and so, finally, in their entireness as systematized. And what is it, but one of the grand functions of Imagination, to enable men to possess this comprehensive grasp of conception? These relations are not at all matters of sense, and cannot be; and they are, therefore, to be perceived, if at all, by some power that reaches forth beyond the sensuous sphere.

Otherwise you have only a kind of mechanical carpentry, instead of a system. A mere builder with his tools may erect four walls, and, putting on a roof, call it an edifice; but in order to its being worthy of a place in architecture, it must have unity of design and harmony of facts. In like manner, no doubt, the mere statistician or logician might put into tabulated forms the doctrines of the Bible, without thus constituting a real system of theology.

"A powerfully imaginative mind," says Ruskin, "seizes and combines at the same instant, not only two, but all important ideas of its poem or picture, and while it works with any one of them, it is, at the same instant, working with and modifying all in their relation to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other. . . This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable, admirable, altogether divine! and yet, wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work."

And what the interpreters and system-makers of religion seem especially to need is, to perceive that this same power of mind is no less vitally useful to them than to the poet and the painter. The demand for Imagination is just as imperative in the construction of a system of religious belief as in the Epic or the Picture. And may we not say that, just in so far as Anselm or John Calvin, or any of the rest, lacked this capacity, they were naturally disqualified for the work of putting together a complete scheme of Christian doctrine, humanly conceived? To what extent any such incapacity existed in the mental constitutions of those intellectual giants, I do not venture to affirm. But one thing is palpable enough, viz.: that no such scheme or system has ever yet by man been brought to completion.

Hence, too, the unhappy results from the domination of Dialectics in Theology, especially during the Middle Ages in Europe, while nominally followers of Aristotle, the schoolmen used often only such hints from his writings as could serve them in their sophistries. With the aid of such pestilent dialectics the essential errors of the Papal Church became established; such as absolution, purgatory, and transubstan-

tiation. Under the influence of this same mischievous tendency the most fanciful and absurd questions were hotly discussed in the name of Theology; as, for example, "How many angels can stand on the point of a needle?" a problem of impossible mathematics and ridiculous metaphysics. Or, again, "Is it possible for God to substitute Himself for the devil or for a gourd? In case he can, then in what manner would the gourd preach, work miracles, or be affixed to the Cross?"

In respect to all which Erasmus said, "There were innumerable quibblings about notions, and relations, and formalitations, and quiddities, which no eye could follow out but that of a lynx, which is said to be able in the thickest darkness to see things that have no existence."

In such barren absurdities and ridiculous nonsense is it possible for mechanical argumentation to issue? And that which was comparatively safe in the hands of a man like Aristotle, with his powerful Imagination and intellectual symmetry, became a storehouse of dangerous blades to the infants and lunatics who undertook to play with them, having neither a knowledge of their use nor the ability to handle them.

Plainly there is not time here to attempt an investigation of this particular field of inquiry; but I suspect that in it may be found not a little of that dessicating influence which has done its part in drying into a kind of fossil deadness some of the formal theology of more recent times.

There has been also a tendency to phrase doctrines in the most abstract terms possible, as if thus they would be more surely preserved from misconception. But is it not true that doctrinal controversies have waxed hotter and more fierce over these very abstractions than over anything else? Those who read and accept the same Bible, the common armory and treasury of all the schools, fall to blows as soon as metaphysical phrases and philosophical distinctions are substituted for Scriptural language and modern statement. And if a vivid and realistic Imagination is essential in counteracting the bad tendency to abstraction in other departments of science, may it not be precisely as serviceable in theology?

Words are not absolutely definite, except as fixed in mathematical science, which manifestly is not applicable to the science of religion. The shield of such truth is always two-sided; and while it shows red to one party, it turns the green to another. The landscape, with its wonderful lines of grace and its blending marvels of beauty, cannot be described by the bare statistics of the surveyor.

Now is not the Imagination that faculty of the mind by which this element of elasticity in words is recognized and made available? Look at the terms, "covenant," "life," "death," "imputation," "atonement," "justification," "satisfaction," "decree," "ability," and others like them, which figure so largely in doctrinal discussions;

are they to be taken, can they be employed with such precision as in mathematics are the words "rectangle," "square," "cube," "sine" and "tangent"? Are they not rather forms, within which meanings are embodied, that are to be reached by a careful interpretation of the forms themselves, as of the nature of symbols?

And it is noticeable in this connection, that the very word commonly employed to express the general fact of creeds, as systematic statements of doctrines, is "SYMBOL"; but a symbol is a sign, an image, some visible representation, rather than an abstract term, with the definiteness of a mathematical formula.

One thing at least would seem to be evident enough, viz.: that the nominally Christian world has not yet been unified upon the basis of these formal statements of beliefs, with all the thought and care that have been expended upon their structure. No processes of Logic have been found capable of so demonstrating them as to induce all good and truth-seeking men to accept them. But, on the contrary, one abstract definition has called forth another, and the controversy of these has originated a third; and so onward, till the field has become full of them, and all in hottest conflict.

Do not misunderstand me here, as if intending to speak disparagingly of the idea or facts of creeds having a necessary existence and valuable functions. They are not to be regarded as inevitably hostile to reason or common sense; but are even essential in religion as elsewhere. And yet in constructing them, there is need of all the mental powers in harmonious co-operation; unless, indeed, in making a creed for the religion of Positivism, when you may properly hand the business over to logic and the sense-faculties exclusively.

Let grammar and lexicon do what they are ordained to do: make ample room for philology, individual and comparative; give the logical faculty and the sensuous understanding opportunity to exercise their functions; but what is here urged, is the employment, heartily and confidently, of another mental power no less essential than the others, to say the least, but which has been misunderstood and very unjustly suspected, and thus by many cast out of the grand service which it alone is commissioned of God to render.

And when we consider the spirit and tendency of the age in which we are living, we must perceive, I think, that against the strong drift toward materialism, which dares to affirm "without phosphorus there is no thought," should be lifted into the place of power precisely this conservative faculty, whose claims have here been advocated.

While the best men among the scientists are vindicating the Imagination in their special department of research and thought, does it not appear evident that there is equal need of it in the science of religion? If there are "tories in science," as Prof. Tyndall avers, who oppose the claims of the Imagination, is it not also true that there

are kindred tories in Theology? If the thought of a Newton can leap from the falling apple to a falling moon only by the power of his Imagination, by what other mental power can the thought of an Augustine, a Luther or a Calvin, leap from the literal lamb on the literal Hebrew altar to "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world"?

Is it not evident, moreover, that we are living and trying to keep our faith in a transition period, when the former statements of doctrine are no longer recognized as entirely adamantine? There is now no reverence left that can shield them from the bold and even audacious spirit of free inquiry which is abroad, and fearlessly lays its hands upon everything within reach. Truth remains the same, while its forms and vehicles of expression change; and these formulas of the past seem not likely to meet the demands of a future not far ahead.

And in the changes now actually transpiring and likely to continue while you and I live, does it not become wise men, or men who care to be wise, to study the past for the discovery, if possible, of that element which has been most neglected, and the undue disregard of which has produced results that to-day stare at us with sphinx-eyes and give us hard riddles to solve?

In the theology of the coming time, then, a theology that must be comprehensive as well as discriminating, and must be, not a piece of wooden carpentry, but a living organism of truth, full of the very life and power of God, it seems to me we are to look for a candid and fearless recognition of the grand and vital functions of the Imagination.

It must see as well as syllogize; must handle Divine truth as a verity not less substantial and real than are those things which belong to politics and commerce; must marshal all the powers of the world to come, as the actual hosts of God, against the comparatively shadowy and phantasmic powers of the world that now is.

MEMORIAL LETTERS.

MEMORIAL LETTERS.

From the Pastor of Plymouth Church, Milwaukee.

My Dear Mrs. Helmer :

Entering into the succession of ministers to the Plymouth Church of Milwaukee at an interval of some years after Mr. Helmer, I found, when I came here, that his name was very familiar in the city. In the memory of a changing Western population it is not often that a man's name is much more than a word written in sand. But Mr. Helmer had formed here other material in which to engrave his name and portraiture.

It was his fortune to leave behind him, when he removed from this city, near friends, not among the living only, but also among the dead. These last, in silent memorials of turf and stone, aided to keep him in remembrance. There were two small graves in Forest Home Cemetery which were often recognized as the resting-places of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Helmer. So that although they went away from us, in a sense they left their children with us. I remember well the day on which a place was made beside these graves for Grace, another child, whose story I shall no doubt read in the book where these lines are printed. And there also the father is laid with his children ; and so they sleep together—so much of them as sleeps.

Besides these, Mr. Helmer left here other friends. This being his first pastorate, he did what many another minister has done in like circumstances—he took to himself a wife from out his congregation. He was married in the church where he ministered. And when he was called from this place he left here the father and mother of his wife, who in the wide circle of their acquaintance kept fresh his memory, which indeed in other circumstances would hardly have faded, for many of his people kept him in their hearts. I discovered early a peculiar fondness in the tone in which his friends spoke of him. It was not alone that they expressed admiration for his talents or praise of his methods, or testimony to his success. But there was affection in the manner of their speech of him. He was a man unforgotten of his friends. This feeling of esteem and love, his character had won for him. Circumstances alone never secure to any man this meed of affection. But in his case the circumstances of his ministry here, wrought in harmony with the qualities of his character to win for him this affectionate regard. It was a united, prosperous, and kindly people to whom he came. They knew him in his youth. His fervent nature was accordant with their own spirit. His marriage was a romance in which many were interested. His labors and abundant sacrifices were fully appreciated. His ill health and his manly fashion of enduring it,

excited compassion and admiration. And all this a quick-sighted and warm-hearted people rightly interpreted as evidence that their young pastor deserved to be beloved.

In illustration of this affection I will venture to set down here an incident which happened but a few weeks ago. I was talking in his office with a merchant of this city, now a member of another communion, but during Mr. Helmer's ministry here a member of his church. Looking through a memorandum-book, which he took from the breast-pocket of his coat, for a newspaper cutting, he produced, among things new and old, a photograph, which he handed me. It was Mr. Helmer's picture, faded a little, reproducing the styles that are old already, and wearing that look of remoteness which these pictures acquire. I confess I was affected by this incident. It is not every minister whose photograph is carried for many years among treasured family pictures, in the breast-pocket of a busy man.

Not only his affectionate remembrance, but Mr. Helmer's influence with the church has survived into my own ministry. Indeed, a man's name cannot exist apart from his influence among those who have known him. Among these, the mention of a name will now set in motion the forces his presence set in motion before. I have evidence that Mr. Helmer's work in this church was of an enduring character. In the case of a church which has had a succession of pastors, it is not always easy to say what part of that which is peculiar in the life and temper of a congregation is due to each one of these. But I have observed that it is in connection with those things which most contribute to permanence and vitality of church life that his name is most often mentioned: as, for instance, his method in prayer-meetings, his earnestness and fidelity in preaching, his emphasis upon the necessity of faith and righteousness, and his perfect trust in the sufficiency of the gospel to do that which it is sent to accomplish.

The church was not only greatly enlarged in numbers during his ministry, but it was strengthened by the character it developed under his teaching. This character was Christian and manly. It was so reasonable and symmetrical a theory of Christianity which he preached: it was not all a theology, and it was not all a sentiment. He did not build alone upon one wall of the church. It was not developed into any form of sensationalism. He appeared to have a correct and adequate idea of what the church was for.

I come upon traces of his work in the characters and intellectual manners of those with whom I labor. It was Mr. Helmer's privilege to teach many in the beginning of their Christian lives. He taught them wisely. And I think he taught them very little they have since been anxious to forget. It is a great privilege to follow in Christian labors a man so earnest and successful; to be able to trust the soundness of his teachings, to be conscious that there is no need that his words should be uprooted, to make room for words more true.

HENRY T. ROSE.

180 BIDDLE STREET, MILWAUKEE, February 25, 1880.

From the Pastor of Union Park Church, Chicago.

DEAR MRS. HELMER :

Although it was to be my lot to enter into his labors, and reap, as best I might, the harvest of his sowing, I had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Helmer. Once on a commencement occasion at New Haven he was pointed out to me as he sat with his class in Alumni Hall, and I recall distinctly how he looked ; but we exchanged no word. Had we both known what was to be, and how soon, with what eagerness should we have sought each other out ! He could have told me and I could have learned so much in a single interview !

Being dead, he yet speaketh. His voice lingers in hundreds of hearts and homes. Round about this Union Park Church his presence is something everywhere felt. The atmosphere is perfumed with his memory. The thoughts which come from his mind abide fresh and vital in other minds. The currents of influence which he set in motion flow on still. Many hands are warmer because he grasped them. Many family circles are sweeter because he sat in the midst of them. Many lives are purer and nobler because of the impulses he gave them.

It is impossible to mingle with the little circles which he drew together, and to hear their expressions of attachment and obligation, without feeling what a helpful moral potency there was in the man, especially in the stamp of his character and aim, to be seen in the organization and temper of this church. Better, perhaps, than anybody else can a succeeding minister decipher just what a predecessor has written on the hearts of a people. To me, coming after him, it is as clear as day that he laid his foundations deep and strong, and builded wisely. His methods were not the stereotyped ones of the average minister ; and in the working of them there was, as I judge, very little of the noise and dust of ecclesiastical machinery ; but the results were such as to put his foresight and efficiency beyond question.

This will be understood when I say it all lies in the one word—*love*. Love was his organizing faculty. He went out after men because he loved them. He drew and held men to him because he loved them. Others might differ from him in opinion, but his love was a bond of union. Men were ashamed to be factious and heady and obstinate in presence of so much patient love. What seems to me to be the remarkably good nature of this church and congregation is largely the outcome and reflection of his wise gentleness. In his love there was the force of gravitation to bind into oneness, and the warmth of the sun to develop and mould life.

Few ministers ever leave so deep an impress of their own lives on the lives of their people. Still less is the number of those who leave an impression so distinctly and sweetly Christian. It is this spirit received from him, and to be perpetuated from generation to generation, which will be his best monument.

F. A. NOBLE.

UNION PARK CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL., February 24, 1880.

From the Clerk of Tompkins Avenue Church, Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN, March 17, 1880.

DEAR MRS. HELMER :

As we of the Tompkins Avenue Church look back over the brief but marked ministry of our first and beloved pastor, our foremost thought is, that with all our sincere appreciation of and affection for him while with us, we did not half know his grandness of character. What faithfulness and untiring industry in his work, so long as work was possible ! what patience and heroism in suffering—and how he hid this suffering from us to the last ! Beloved pastor and friend, we know it now, as memory recalls the past, and we bless God that you were given to us, if only for a little time. The life and example of this dear pastor—this Christian gentleman and earnest, devoted minister—will be an inspiration to this people forever.

It was our good fortune, and Mr. Helmer's, that he became the teacher and leader of the church in its earliest formative period, and was thus permitted to give it a distinctive character which will be permanent—a character of positiveness and firmness in all essentials of Christian doctrine and life, and of broad and intelligent liberality in all else. Christianity to him was not a theological system only ; it was a life, and everything which was helpful to weak and tempted men and women and children in living that life was a vital element therein.

As we look back over this short but fruitful ministry we recall how practical and helpful it was, how faithfully and wisely the strength and comfort of the Scriptures were ministered to us. After almost every discourse, one and another would be heard to say, Would that that sermon could be printed, that we might read it over and over. And what a clear and vigorous grasp of divine truth was his ! He seemed always to get beneath the words of the text into its deepest spirit, and bring to us the very inmost truth of the inspired message. And always so quietly and simply too—without the slightest demonstration of learning—as if the ripest fruit of his study and prayer and experience were the clearest right of his hearers in every discourse.

His ability was very marked in the prayer-meeting, where his seemingly intuitive knowledge of the tone and possibilities of a meeting led to a wonderful tact in drawing out its real spirit and force. He came into the meeting really to lead *it*, not to impress himself or his then particular thought upon it, and so he developed and moulded into effectiveness whatever of power it contained.

Although Mr. Helmer came to us a sick man, for a year and a half his labor was untiring and almost uninterrupted. He actively entered into and guided all the abundant work of the church, and by his wise and earnest counsel infused enthusiasm into all its departments. At his coming the church numbered only forty-two members ; during this first year and a half of his pastorate, one hundred and sixty-seven persons were added to its membership.

But the great sorrow which came, in March, 1877, in the death of your little Grace, seemed to stop the current of returning health and strength, and he never was the same man afterward. How deep this grief had entered his heart and life

was shown by the sermon on the "Divine Estimate of Childhood," which he preached upon his return from his Western funeral journey. No one who heard that discourse—preached almost without notes, but with a clearly divine inspiration—can readily forget it. He dwelt upon the fact that the littleness and feebleness of the children endeared them to God's heart, and that the supreme power of the universe was pledged for their help and defense; on the possibilities of the future of the little ones in all directions of human endeavor and Christian grace; on their relations to society—childhood being the world's rudder; and on the reciprocal mission of childhood in teaching and training father and mother and friends in self-denial, and sacrifice cheerfully rendered, and all the essential and characteristic elements of the kingdom of heaven. His tender and tearful allusion to his own fresh bereavement—the third darling he had given back to the divine Giver—lent great power and pathos to the discourse. And it was at the infant baptismal service of that morning that he introduced his beautiful custom of presenting each little one with a white ribbon-bound basket of flowers, in memory of his own dear child who had just gone from him.

After this affliction strength did not permanently return, and the summer vacation failed of its usual reinvigoration. It became apparent that he was pursuing his work under great physical hindrances, and in November the church and society united in urging him to take a vacation until his health was regained, if that were possible. Then for nearly a year the beloved pastor sought health, and the loving church waited patiently but anxiously for his coming back. On September 15th following, that longed-for reunion came. Will any member of the church or congregation ever forget the joy of that beautiful Sabbath day? The ladies had given expression to the feeling of every heart by a tasteful and elaborate floral decoration of platform and pulpit, and the pastor, in seemingly vigorous health again, preached with more than the old vigor. And what a delightful communion service it was that followed—pastor and people again united, and every heart full to overflowing with thanksgiving! But was joy ever so soon overthrown! In the evening it was noticed, with quick alarm, that the morning strength had not continued, and the pastor was making great physical effort to finish a service which proved to be the last he ever conducted. Only once afterward did he again enter his pulpit. One bright Sunday morning in December, before leaving Brooklyn for the last time, he came back for a few moments and baptized a company of little ones of his people, and once more distributed his pretty floral tokens.

The life and work of this dear pastor can never be forgotten, and their memory will remain a lasting benediction to the Tompkins Avenue Church.

Sincerely yours,

HENRY HEATH.

From the President of Beloit College, Wisconsin.

DEAR MRS. HELMER :

It is a pleasure to me to recall my associations with your esteemed husband, now translated to the presence of the Lord he loved, and at your request to put my recollections into form, such as may help to keep his memory fresh and fragrant amid the scenes in which his life on earth was passed.

I first saw Mr. Helmer at the meeting of the council called to ordain him pastor of Plymouth Church, in Milwaukee. A good report of him from his college mates, and from friends in Hartford, Conn., where his first efforts as a preacher were the admiration of many whom I knew, had prepared me to give him a hearty welcome. The manner in which he met a long and searching examination by the council engaged my interest and confidence—so clearly did he define his views of divine truth,—so fully and firmly did he hold the grand, fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, so simply yet frankly did he tell the story of his soul's experience of the preciousness of those truths, and so thoroughly did he seem charged with the proclamation of Christ's Gospel, as the mission of his life. Sincerity characterized all his utterances, and his whole spirit and bearing bore the stamp of genuine Christian manliness. There was in him no concealment, no evasion, no wish to break away from old landmarks, or to substitute conceits of his own for the plain testimony of God's word, but a beautiful transparency of thought and purpose which forbade suspicion and distrust. The council, with one mind, judged him called of God and endued by the Holy Ghost for the work of the ministry, and heartily laid hands on him accordingly. The whole course of his after life confirmed that judgment. That life revealed his leading thought to be like that of his Master, "not to be ministered unto but to minister," and his ministry was for life and salvation to his fellow-men.

My opportunities to hear Mr. Helmer in the pulpit were not many, but enough to produce a distinct impression of his power as a preacher. It was a power which I felt on my own soul, which I saw on others in the audiences addressed. I never heard from him a "*great sermon*," in the common sense of that term as used by ministerial critics. But I never heard one which did not interest and profit me, and, so far as I could judge, others also. He did not deal much with the philosophy of religion, nor with the profound and dark problems of theology. His chosen themes were the patent truths and plain precepts of Christianity. These he presented, in a practical way all his own own, to the mind, the heart, the conscience of his hearers, that they might find place in their daily thinking and living. He spoke as one who knew what he had to say, and felt that he must say it, for a present effect. The truths were old and familiar, but, having passed through the alembic of his own mind, they came out fresh and sparkling, to engage attention, to convince and persuade, to confirm and edify. He seemed to me a man entirely free from *cant*, and at the same time full of deep reverence for Christ and his truth. He would do nothing in a merely perfunctory manner, nor to produce a temporary sensation. As I analyze it, the magnetic power which he evidently exercised over a congregation had for its elements great clearness of thought, simplicity and beauty of illustration, words carefully chosen, an elocu-

tion almost perfect, all backed by evident sincerity of belief on his own part and an earnest desire to win the faith of others for their good.

The clearness of his thought and style was once evinced to me in a singular way. He had come, on invitation of our students, to give a lecture in Beloit. A large audience was gathered, and he commenced reading, but had hardly finished his second page when a sick-headache under which he was laboring compelled him to stop. He could not stay over another day, nor come again. It was proposed that some one read his manuscript for him. He consented, and on the impulse of the moment I undertook to give the reading. I was not familiar with his chirography, and it was not very plain, but, getting a start with what I had already heard, by a severe effort of attention I succeeded after a fashion ; the lines of thought bearing me on and bringing light, each instant, to clear up obscure words and to engage interest and feeling in advance. I am sure that in nine cases out of ten such an attempt would have ended in failure.

It was my privilege occasionally to witness Mr. Helmer's method of conducting prayer-meetings, in which he seemed to succeed wonderfully, by the absence of anything like a stereotyped method or plan. He appeared always quite at ease, and his manner put everybody else at ease for the free, spontaneous expression in prayer or remark of those common thoughts and sentiments which are the bond of true Christian fellowship. He had a happy way of breaking down all stiffness and constraint, and yet, by a few suggestive words of his own, he would impart a rich, reverent, spiritual tone to the varied exercises. I think he made careful preparation for these meetings, and so attained, with reference to such occasions, "the perfection of art which is to conceal art," with the best effect on those present.

His tact in such matters was also strikingly illustrated in one of his Thanksgiving day services in Chicago, at which I chanced to be present. The programme was cast for a service of praise, and the effect was to me most delightful, as, by the grand organ performance, the rich vocal song, and his words of devout prayer and brief address, my soul was filled with a sense of the divine goodness, and borne aloft on a swelling tide of grateful praise.

As a trustee of Beloit College I came to know Mr. Helmer as a man wise in counsel. He always gave his pastoral duties the precedence, and consequently was often kept away from the meetings of our board. But when present he entered with interest into the consideration of the matters brought up, and was quick to perceive the points of the case, and ready with timely, practical suggestions on the difficult problems connected with the building up of such an institution. Appreciating his thorough knowledge and wise administration of divine truth, the college desired to honor him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. But with characteristic modesty he declined the distinction.

Through friends who were under his charge I learned much of Mr. Helmer's character as a pastor, both in Milwaukee and in Chicago. I cannot better express my estimation of him in that regard than to quote a few words which I was moved to utter at a meeting of Plymouth Church a few days after his burial. "He was pre-eminently a *pastor*. In that office he fulfilled the apostle's injunc-

tion, and '*fed the flock of God*' over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. It was his chosen office. Its work was no drudgery to him; he took up its duties with enthusiasm and delight. His aim was not to surprise or entertain an audience, but to feed hungry souls. And the food he offered was not the musty straw of old theologies, nor crude and indigestible conceits of his own reason, nor the quips and quirks of wit and fancy, nor the froth of empty declamation, but it was the substantial truth of God's word gathered fresh by his own careful study, made clear and attractive by the best use of all the gifts of a well-endowed mind, and commended to the acceptance of all by the warm appeal of a loving heart." His labors in the pulpit were followed up by a gentle, faithful watchfulness to minister to each member of his flock as their needs and circumstances required. Few pastors, I think, have ever gained so strong a hold on the esteem and affection of their people as he secured. Through his preaching and through the unconscious influence of a consistent, godly life, he has left on many souls impressions that will abide through their eternal life-time.

In his personal relations to me Mr. Helmer bore himself always as a kind and true friend. His society was quieting and cheering to me, and on almost all subjects our views were in harmony, and our sympathies flowed freely together. I mourn with you that we shall see his face no more. Yet I thank God that I have known something of his life, and that, though cut off in the midst of his best years, we can trace so much of good achieved, by the divine blessing, through his labors.

May the blessed Saviour reveal himself your joy and stay!

Sincerely yours,

A. L. CHAPIN.

BELOIT COLLEGE, November 23, 1879.

From Prof. Z. M. Humphrey, Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati.

DEAR MRS. HELMER:

After closing my pastorate in Plymouth Church, Milwaukee, it was very natural that I should feel some solicitude as to who should be my successor. That pastorate had covered a memorable period of revival, in whose gracious influences the whole country shared. During this period a large number of persons had been gathered into the church. Among them were many in the first flush of maturity, yourself among the number. Who would be selected to give them the shepherd's care? Would the coming pastor appreciate the necessity of their spiritual training? Would he feed the flock, or content himself with amusing them by playing for them on his shepherd's pipes? Would he know them by name, and be ever ready to bring home the wandering? Would he lead the way to the higher shelves of pasturage as the flock became strong enough to climb?

I was encouraged to believe that all these and similar questions would be satisfactorily answered, when I heard that a young man of unusual culture and opportunity had been invited to the pastorate. I was told that he was mature in devel-

opment, though still fresh in the sympathies and the enthusiasm of life's morning. It was ten o'clock with him, and he had still a fair stretch of sky between him and the meridian. He was a poet, they said ; but he could speak in clear cool prose, so as to make himself understood. He had been occupying for some time the pulpit in which the gifted Dr. Bushnell was accustomed to stand, and was welcome there, notwithstanding that he "came after the king." On the whole the prospect was good, and I breathed freely. After a while I met him, and was satisfied. I found in him a frank and sincere soul. I learned that in the prayer-meeting his gifts were even more conspicuous than in the pulpit, and that the prayer-meeting was regarded by him as pre-eminently the sphere of spiritual culture. I saw that he was a man to love and to be loved, without fear that affection would ever be slighted or betrayed. I saw that he had a directness and earnestness of purpose which would carry him straight to results. Hence I was not surprised when I learned that he reached the results most to be desired in the growth of both church and congregation. He was cheerful, too, and hopeful. I need not say that the history of his Milwaukee pastorate justified all the hopes in which it was founded.

Ought I to have been surprised, when I was invited to unite him by the matrimonial tie to one of the best loved of my "Milwaukee girls?" I am sure that I responded to the call without misgiving. The day when that tie was knit you are not likely to forget. Two of your former pastors were engaged in the ceremony. Around you was a church crowded with people, out of each of whose hearts went a benediction. And when their congratulations were subsequently offered in your father's house, you must have felt that their wishes were prayers. That was indeed a notable wedding ; all the more so to me because of the spontaneous outpouring of regard for the pastor which it occasioned.

Seldom has a pastor enjoyed a more gratifying and uniform success than that which attended your husband's administration in Plymouth Church. His mental characteristics peculiarly adapted him to the sphere he occupied. Milwaukee is often said to have somewhat of a Boston atmosphere. If so, Mr. Helmer's culture, refinement, and love of the beautiful fitted him for life there. Milwaukee certainly has the vigor of a Western city, and Mr. Helmer was suited to a community in which the currents are swift and strong. His style of preaching was suited to a people accustomed to vivid impressions, and appreciating clear-cut and forcible thought. His spirituality, too, was in harmony with the "genius" of the church. His predecessors loved revival work ; so did he. Yet they were conservative in their habits of revival work ; so was he. They had great confidence in the regular development of church life ; so had he. He was soon as much wonted to his place as if he had grown up in it. One of the brightest eras of the prosperity of the church was undoubtedly that of his pastorate.

I did not often meet him after he left Milwaukee ; but whenever I did it was with unmixed pleasure. The last time I saw him was in the summer of 1877. It was at Saratoga. I was there for recreation ; he was there for the recovery of his health. I was pained to see how the roundness and color had disappeared from his cheek. But the old brightness was in his large round eye. The old ring was

in his voice. Much of the old elasticity was in his step. Hopeful as ever, he thought he was on the high road to recovery. That obstinate malaria, he thought, was nearly driven out of his system. He should outgrow it, and do his best work yet. We sat on the piazza of one of the hotels until far into the evening, talking of the past, the present, the future; of memory, of fact, of hope. It was the pleasantest of my Saratoga experiences, to meet so old and so dear a friend, and to hear m talk in so healthful a strain of life and of its work.

In looking over such of the tributes to his memory as have fallen under my notice, I observe the singular unanimity with which the simplicity, the honesty, the transparent frankness, the genuine manliness of your husband are commemorated. These are the qualities which I always noticed in him with admiration. They are noble qualities. They are among the best which can adorn the character of a Christian minister. The well-known author of "Tom Brown at Rugby" has recently published a little work on "The Manliness of Christ." Mr. Helmer might have written such a book, and would have written it in full sympathy with the theme. A fitting line for his monument would be, "He was every inch a man, for he was every inch a Christian."

His remains are resting where, I doubt not, he would have chosen to have them repose—amid the peaceful shades of Forest Home, in Milwaukee. That is a spot which is dear to me for other reasons than because Milwaukee was once my home. He will be well remembered by hundreds who look upon his grave, as one of the purest and truest men they ever knew. He will find himself surrounded by familiar faces when the trumpet of resurrection is blown, and when both man and woman rise in perfect symmetry because they rise in the image of Christ.

Affectionately yours,

Z. M. HUMPHREY.

LANE SEMINARY, CINCINNATI, February 7, 1880.

REV. C. D. HELMER.

NECROLOGICAL SKETCH.

From Minutes of the General Association of New York.

BY LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D.

MY personal acquaintance with the Rev. C. D. Helmer was neither prolonged nor intimate enough to enable me to give a just or adequate estimate of his character and life-work; but it was enough to confirm the singularly unanimous testimony of the many witnesses who have testified since his death to his æsthetic goodness. There is a singularly vivifying power in a life when both the *Advance* and the *Alliance*, both Simeon Gilbert and David Swing, come to lay flowers on the new-made grave. The Greeks used one word—καλός—to express both the beautiful and the good.

I think, in the presence of C. D. Helmer, I can understand why.

The whole outward story of his life might be engraved upon his tombstone, and the stone not be very large: Born, 1827; converted, 1842; graduated at Yale, 1852; temporary supply of Dr. Bushnell's congregation, 1859; pastor of Plymouth Church, Milwaukee, 1859 to 1865; recruiting broken health, 1865 to 1866; pastor of Union Park Church, Chicago, 1866 to 1875; pastor of Tompkins Avenue Congregational Church, 1875 to 1878; died, 1879. These are the prosaic dates and outline; the poetry and the romance who can narrate?

I judge that if Mr. Helmer's body had been worthy of his soul; if he had possessed that good digestion, rich blood, and full reservoir of nervous power which are the elements of the highest health, he would have ranked among the very first preachers of America. There is something physical in true oratory. The greatest orators have generally, if not always, been men of rare bodily attainments; and Mr. Helmer's body was his weakest part. He succumbed early in his life to that incomprehensible malignity of nature—malaria—and he lived out nearly all his life fighting sin in other people and disease in himself.

The key-note to his character was his spiritual insight; he was a poet and a spiritualist.

Quarrels about names are unprofitable quarrels; but I decline to give this highest and best cognomen in our language—spiritualist—to the most materialistic sect which can conceive no better manifestation of the spirit-world than clammy hands, and no better voices from it than whimsical and sometimes riotously-turbulent noises. Mr. Helmer was a true spiritualist, whose inward sense was keen and fine by nature, and developed by grace. He named his daughter Faith; his favorite topic was that spiritual sense which is the evidence of things unseen. It has been a question whether moles have eyes, though I believe critical examination discovers them very small. Faith seems to me in most men like eyes in a mole, so very small that it is a problem whether they have any; it was in Mr. Helmer the grand faculty, the supreme power, the one final discerner and arbiter of all truth. The worship which most men in this nineteenth century offer to Reason, he offered to Faith; at what time the sackbut, and psaltery, and harp, and all kinds of music sounded, he refused to bow down before the image which modern science and modern theology have combined to set up. To him the things not seen were the real; the things not proved nor provable were the certain and the true. With this key in our possession, if perchance we have faith enough ourselves to possess it, we can solve the riddle of his seemingly contradictory character.

He was strong in his convictions, and yet he believed in the completeness and comprehensiveness of no theology. He not only thought that no one pint pot could hold the ocean—he did not believe that all the pint pots in the world put in a row together could contain it. To him God was more than any definition of His attributes; God's government more than any system of interpretation that is or ever is to be; the soul and its experiences were more than psychology. Phillips Brooks, commenting on Christ's declaration—"Every man that is of the truth heareth my voice"—thus finely, though unconsciously, portrays him: "A man

of the truth is a man into all whose life the truth has been pressed till he is full of it, till he has been given to it, and it has been given to him, he being always the complete being whose unity is in that total of moral, intellectual, and spiritual life which makes what we call character."

In this definition of truth Mr. Helmer was a thorough and profound believer. For this portrait Mr. Helmer might himself have sat. This profound conviction made him at once strong and tolerant. He was liberal, without being careless; courageous, without being dogmatic; evangelical, without being narrow; progressive, without being an iconoclast; independent, without being unsympathetic; for he was liberal to all opinion—to all, not because he was indifferent to any, but because he perceived that truth transcends all statements and definitions; courageous, not because of personal or ecclesiastical pride, but because truth was in him a living experience, an inviolable and indisputable fact; evangelical, not because he thought the evangelical creed is the one ark that can save the truth in a deluge of destructive heresy, but because it corresponds with the profound experiences of sin and salvation, which shallower creeds deny; progressive, not because he was contemptuous of truth already mined and minted, but because he was sure that God's universe had in it more of divine disclosure than man had as yet discovered; independent, because he dreaded nothing so much as that ecclesiasticism whose constant tendency has been to deny that the average man has spiritual light, and so makes him a mole by declaring him to be one.

I make no attempt here to speak of Mr. Helmer's tenderness of feeling, geniality of social sympathy, transparent genuineness of soul, love of nature and felicity of expression. I can think of no higher testimony to the permanence of his power over all with whom he came in contact, than the fact that after fourteen years' absence in other fields of labor, his first parish asked and obtained the privilege of holding in the church building the memorial services, and carrying, from the desk where he had preached fourteen years before, his body to its last resting-place.

From Prof. J. T. Hyde, Congregational Theological Seminary, Chicago.

DEAR MRS. HELMER:

"Like a strain of distant music heard in boyhood" is this line or two from an old letter dated Hartford, Conn., November 19th, 1858: "Mr. Helmer is now assisting Dr. Bushnell. He is a young man of great abilities, and very original. He has never been ordained, but is liked exceedingly." I had known him well in college. I soon met him in Hartford. Never, however, did I hear him preach until I had come with my family to the Union Park Church of Chicago, September 4th, 1870. From that time, indeed, I heard him seldom except in prayer-meetings, or on special occasions, as at the dedication of the Forty-seventh Street, now the South Congregational Church, June 2d, 1872, on "One greater than the Temple." But I found in him a congenial brother and friend. We met quite

often in our walks and talks. As I returned home, with recruited health, just when he was breaking down (September 18th, 1875), I stood by him and preached for him in those parting services, when he could scarcely control himself to speak or pray, to baptize the children (October 17th), or to read his own resignation (December 12th). To me he wrote of his Brooklyn life, from his first cordial reception to his last hopeful effort. We met, *last as first*, under the elms at Yale, where we talked with unwonted warmth and freedom of his most sacred convictions and aspirations.

To what others have said of his ministry little need be added. I should emphasize still more, perhaps, his independence of spirit, his brightness and breadth of view, his liberality of feeling, his strength of will, his play of fancy, his sprightliness and felicity of expression, his sympathy with the developing tendencies of the day, and his growingly evangelical earnestness. But I wish to speak of him *as a man*.

1. Of his love of nature. He might well travel in Europe with knapsack and staff, or roam with rod and gun over prairies or through forests. His heart was always with the birds and flowers, or on the lakes, or by the sea, or among the mountains. He was exquisitely sensitive to all the wonders of earth and sky. He communed with God in nature, and was fond of tracing the supernatural in the natural, and could worship with every child of nature at her shrines and altars as truly as with the children of God in the sanctuary. His annual thanksgiving service needed a gathering of the golden grain and the luscious fruits as a symbol of God's goodness. He accepted nature as the oldest book of divinity, and had a fine sense, at once poetic and philosophic, of the value of her teachings.

2. His love of beauty. To no beauty of form or face, of color or proportion, of theory or character, of ceremony or conduct, of nature or art, was he indifferent. His æsthetic appreciation of things was very marked. He wanted to have them not only good and right, but in some noble, handsome, and happy manner. He cultivated, therefore, the graces of style. He was at home with the poets, artists, and musicians. He revolted from all that seemed mean, unfair, unlovely, unmanly, degrading. His prayers and sermons were full of lofty imaginings and heavenly visions. He could not have built any but a grand and attractive house of worship. He could not enjoy any but the most perfect hymns and tunes. His cross was that he could never come up to his own ideal. At length he crucified even his taste for oratorical elegancies and eloquence, scarcely ever even writing a full sermon, but content to speak as was most easy and simple, saying in his heart, like Richard Baxter, "Fineness is for ornament and delicacy for delight, but they answer not necessity."

3. His faith. Not without significance did he give this name to his daughter. His favorite topic was that spiritual faculty which discerns and trusts more than it absolutely knows, which is better than any mere strength and acuteness of intellect or well-trained mind. Sometimes he seemed to run against or athwart theology and logic, and not simply because he caught the "imaginative aspects of things" and the "evanescent hues of feeling," but because he had a power of spiritual apprehension—"the hearing ear and understanding heart." He dis-

trusted all systems, scientific, philosophic, or theologic, as too one-sided or dogmatic, or dialectic, as forming rather the "outworks of faith," as dealing with "the shells rather than with the kernel of divine things," and would have said, with Coleridge, "Believe, and if thy belief be right, that *insight* which gradually transmutes faith into knowledge will be the reward of thy belief"; or with Principal Shairp, "College learning is good, but not all the learning of all the universities can compensate for the loss of that which the youth reared in a religious home has learned in his childhood at his mother's knee." Opposite to these last words, in a book he gave me, he has written "*Faith.*"

4. His courage. To us, when we were boys, it was somewhat of a trial to preach *for* and *to* Dr. Horace Bushnell, especially when we did not agree with him. To preach to ministers and theological professors with whom we are at variance in opinion and policy; to build a large and costly church, and carry it on through disastrous years and under an enormous debt; to maintain a positive, evangelical faith, while in sympathy with all manner of modern doubt, in a congregation full of the most intelligent critics and dissenters as well as unbelievers; to preach against abuses, and for reforms, public and private; to face domestic insurrections, now and then, in choirs or in church and society meetings, or in financial straits, when men agree only to differ, and women vote as well as men, and parties are evenly divided, with a thorough recognition of the right of private judgment, and an abiding confidence in the most democratic freedom; to stand by eminent and honored friends, through good or evil report, without any knowledge of their innocence or guilt, for the simple sake of seeing that they suffer from no injustice or foul play, *requires courage.* He was more than hopeful or sanguine —more than well-balanced and self-possessed. He was fearless in emergencies, and always brave enough to be true to his own convictions. Sometimes he studied for months on a subject on which he was troubled, if not skeptical, but, having made up his mind, he preached it boldly. With what power and pathos, *e.g.*, did he preach "everlasting punishment!"

5. His patience. His powers of endurance were amazing. With brain, heart, and lungs never overpowered by disease nor even by medicine until the very last, he would not succumb to any adversity, infirmity, or pain. He died only when his nerves and muscles were entirely wasted away, and he seemed but the shadow of himself. But he could stop even in his agony and speculate and write, even within a few weeks of his death, on "the mystery of pain." He could sing "Out of the Depths" when his heart was sobbing, and his body was "broken, bleeding, slain"—"In thee, O loving foe! I still will trust." He would not allow any suggestion that his fate was hard or his suffering cruel, but could always say, as he wrote to me from his sick-bed, "What the Lord has in store for me I know not. I am at a point in life where there is nothing to be done *but* 'wait on the Lord.'" When his face was illumined, and seemed to be transfigured in his dying hour, though he could not speak, he must have caught the smile of the once agonized Lord, and had some foregleam of that home where is "the patience of the saints."

6. His devotion to the family. To him God was, indeed, a Father, or Father

and Mother infinitely exalted, yet inexpressibly dear. His thoughts ran much along the lines of parental and filial love. His own home-life glowed with love and beauty. His religion called, above all, for household piety. He was thoroughly tinctured with the spirit and meaning of Dr. Bushnell's book on "Christian Nurture." He delighted in family circles and festivals. His great grief was that he had no more strength for family visitation. In the loss of the three little children—more than half of his own children—his love of little children was trebled. His last service at Union Park and at Tompkins Avenue was the baptism of "a beautiful group of beloved babies."

He was buried in May—the month he loved for its blossoming hopes. He "moved" and "entered into rest,"—but, we trust, for a more blissful and glorious ministry.

JAMES T. HYDE.

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

From Bishop Fallows, Reformed Episcopal Church, Chicago.

CHICAGO, ILL., March 5, 1880.

MRS. C. D. HELMER.

DEAR MADAM: The very pleasant recollection of my acquaintance with your lamented husband, during his pastorates in Milwaukee and Chicago, prompts me to add my tribute of respect and love to his memory.

In my first interview with him I was specially impressed with his winning grace and ease of manner, which I found, as our friendship increased, to spring naturally from the inner grace of a well-poised and thoroughly lovable soul. No one could be with him for the briefest space of time without being conscious of the fact that he was in the presence of a truly Christian gentleman. His courteousness was that of a chivalrous Knight. Beneath the charm and deference of his bearing was plainly to be seen the subdued strength of an iron will.

In his sermons, public addresses, and contributions to the press, clearness and compactness of thought were combined with rare felicity of diction, in sentences which were often full of deep, poetic meaning. The first lecture I had the privilege of hearing him deliver fastened itself permanently in my memory by its logical arrangement, its subtle, critical analysis, and its exquisite verbal beauty.

But I remember him with affectionate regard chiefly for his eminent, I might justly say pre-eminent, catholicity of feeling. He was a Christian cosmopolitan. He loved breadth of views, in intellectual and spiritual matters, as life itself. Every fibre of his being was electric with energy against bigotry. With a royal hospitality he welcomed Truth and the lovers of Truth from every quarter. No lines of latitude or longitude in the ecclesiastical world could shut him out from fellowship and co-operation with the sincere followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Holy Catholic Church" was to him "the communion of saints," and he believed in it with all his heart. Loyal to the core to his own convictions, he ever conceded,

with a charity that was divine in its nature, the right of others to hold their own. Differing with them on minor points, he yet worked eloquently and manfully with them in the substantial unity of the truth, for common Christian ends. The world and the Church could ill afford to lose such a man in the very prime of his powers. But we must not murmur. Being dead, he yet speaketh. The volume you are soon to send forth, garnering a few sheaves of his busy and successful life, will prove an inspiration to many a soldier of Christ, to fight more patiently and bravely "the good fight of faith." With prayer for the blessing of God upon you in your labor of love,

I remain, very truly yours,

SAMUEL FALLOWS.

From the Pastor of North Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass.

MY DEAR MRS. HELMER:

My acquaintance with Mr. Helmer was limited. I met him only two or three times; but by correspondence and through his communications to the press I had come to have some knowledge of his mind and heart. Some of us who never saw Frederick Robertson, or Norman McLeod, or Augustus Hare, feel that we know them pretty well—much better, indeed, than we know some of our neighbors with whom every day we exchange greetings.

My first recollections of Mr. Helmer are of reports that came from Hartford, when in the pulpit of our dear old master and friend, Dr. Bushnell, he was preaching with so much of acceptance in the first year of his ministry. The echoes of his voice that reached me from that high place indicated the freshness and vigor of his thought, and many yet live in Hartford who treasure the memory of those youthful discourses.

Of his work in Milwaukee I often heard, through friends in his congregation, and his frequent contributions to the newspapers afforded an opportunity of judging what that work must be.

When I met him first in Chicago, while the ruins of the great fire were still smoking, I felt that I knew him already; and two or three long conversations at that time were the beginning of a very pleasant friendship.

Mr. Helmer was by nature a poet. Not only, not even chiefly in his verse did his poetic gift find utterance; it gleamed out in his talk, in many a vivid bit of characterization; it irradiated his sermons as well as his familiar speech. His German studies had nourished this gift; the picturesqueness of the Teutonic idioms were reproduced in many of his epithets.

Of course this power of imagination and poetic utterance were of inestimable value to him as a preacher. It is not in the gracefulness and beauty of his style that the poet-preacher finds his true account; the sympathetic insight of truth is the great gain that accrues to him and to them that hear him. No man has any business to preach who is destitute of imagination. Moral truth in its highest as-

pects cannot be apprehended without the aid of the imagination. The profoundest religious truth can only be expressed in poetry, and the moment it is hardened into logical form its life is destroyed, its meaning is gone ; it is a dismal and pestilent lie. It was precisely because poetry was the native element of Mr. Helmer's mind that he was so winning and helpful a preacher.

His work in that great church at Chicago is the proof of his quality. To have gathered and held so long and so firmly such a congregation as assembled week by week in the noble Union Park Church to listen to him, to have built up by his judicious leadership and his energetic work so strong and enterprising a religious society as the one that worshipped in that beautiful edifice, is evidence of power.

It was my good fortune to stand in that pulpit for several successive Sundays, once during his ministry there, and once again after he had sadly laid the burden down ; and there was no lack of testimony to the fidelity and earnestness of his ministry.

Mr. Helmer was rightly counted among the Orthodox Liberals. To all the historical facts of our religion he held as firmly as any man ; but he did venture to give to these facts an interpretation somewhat different from the traditional one. If one is to be accounted evangelical who believes that men are saved from sin and ruin by faith in Jesus Christ, then Mr. Helmer was evangelical. But he was not one of those Congregationalists who repudiate John Robinson's principles ; he believed the light of this new day to be quite as well worth walking in as the light that shone three hundred years ago. And he was always bravely and resolutely hostile to every attempt to strangle inquiry and to turn the Congregational fellowship into a creed-bound sect.

It is hard to spare him. There is work yet to do that he could have greatly helped in doing. But doubtless there is better work elsewhere that he has found ere this. The work is all one, and in some way that we may not comprehend he is still our fellow-helper. The space that he filled here is vacant, but the work that he has done here abides ; we have not lost the pressure of his hand or the firm tones of his manly voice, and every thought of him will be a summons to brave and faithful living.

Very truly yours,

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

SPRINGFIELD, February 11, 1880.

From the Professor of Greek Language and Literature, Hamilton College.

CLINTON, N. Y., February 14, 1880.

MY DEAR MRS. HELMER :

Thirty years have gone since I first knew Charles D. Helmer. As a student he was manly, sober-minded, graceful, and inspired with a passion for learning, yet seemingly indifferent to the ordinary forms of undergraduate distinction. His responses in the class-room were given with an inbred dignity, self-possession, clearness, and finish that made it delightful to be his instructor. In later

years I have had pleasant interviews and correspondence with Mr. Helmer. I have precious memories of his power in the pulpit, of his wit and wisdom, his friendship and sympathy. The even and upward tenor of his whole life is one of its marked characteristics. In college he was unselfish, unboyish, and sedate. As a man his daily walk and conversation were sweet with the guileless candor and charm of childhood. His tenderness for his wife and children comes back to memory like the rhythm of one of Tennyson's idyls. If "his soul was like a star and dwelt apart," it was free from any scornful indifference to the degraded, the coarse, and the worldly. His passion for music gained in strength and fineness of appreciation as he advanced in years. Discord of any kind was torture to him. I love to think of him as a lover of music, fully satisfied now that he is awake to the highest life in the likeness of his Creator, and lapped in eternal harmonies.

I rejoice that a selection of Mr. Helmer's discourses is to be published, and remain, with the highest esteem,

Yours very truly,

EDWARD NORTH.

From Rev. J. Leonard Corning, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., February 8, 1880.

MRS. C. D. HELMER.

MY DEAR FRIEND: How glad have I been to learn, since my return to America after long exile, that a memorial of your sainted husband was in contemplation. He needs not the help of type to conserve his precious memory in the hearts of the thousands who knew and loved him. But a great multitude who were blessed by his life and ministry will thankfully welcome such imperfect record as language can convey. To me it seems almost a mockery to attempt to put into words a testimony of the respect and affection in which for nearly a score of years I held that gifted and good man.

From the first hour of our acquaintance his life has been magnetic to me, and whether in daily intercourse or parted from one another by half a continent and the wide ocean, the bond of attraction has never lost strength, but has grown more sacred and influential year by year. Nor is it broken now. Nay, rather his life is a mightier force at this moment than ever before, and its benediction is the witness of its immortality. Those happy ones who enjoyed his ministry while the glorified spirit was still in the flesh are probably numbered by thousands, and among these I would have my name enrolled; for although to the world's eye we were fellow-laborers, for a time side by side, in the Master's vineyard, yet there never was an hour during the long period of our friendship in which I was not conscious of a real pastoral influence coming from his life into mine with a perpetual benediction. What preacher does not betimes get hungry for a pastor, a superior spirit to guide, a loving heart to sympathize?

I have had such a divinely-sent minister in my public labors, and I will never forget him. His name was Charles D. Helmer. As regards visible recognition, he has been dismissed from his charge ; but I will call thee pastor yet, sainted brother and friend ; and from thy heavenly home wilt thou still send down messages of help and inspiration !

I will not allow my pen to be tempted to an analysis of the character of my loved friend and brother, and the forces of intellect and heart which made his life exceptionally fruitful of blessing to the world.

As for intellect, the multitudes who heard him preach from year to year know that all his performances with word and pen were at the farthest possible remove from commonplace.

Trained in the strictest culture of the schools, he was never, from earliest youth, in bondage to routine. Originality in thought, rare skill in composition, and above all, a solemn intent to waken attention to the message of truth, gave perpetual freshness to his utterances. Whenever he spoke his hearers were eager to hear more, and not a congregation that he ever preached to, but was conscious of the intellectual quickening as well as the moral and spiritual inspiration of his addresses.

One memory, which has personal relations almost calling for an apology for reviving it, has for many years been present with me as a salient interpreter of his character. Nearly a score of years have elapsed since we were thrown into close relationship by my removal, from Buffalo to Milwaukee, to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of that city. Only a short time previously he had assumed the charge of the Plymouth Congregational Church of the same city, and the edifices in which we preached were within a stone's throw of one another, on opposite sides of the street. The only advantage which I could claim over my neighboring brother was that of novelty, a helpful circumstance in gaining a constituency in any quarter of the globe, not least in the West. By reason of this accident it came to pass that for a time the church of the Presbyterian pastor was rather more frequented, especially on Sabbath evenings, than that of his brother over the way. And will the new-comer ever forget how often on a Monday morning his Congregational neighbor congratulated him upon the size of his audience on the previous evening, a respectable fraction of which was stolen from the other side of the street !

There was not a remote corner in the heart of my brother in which the passions of envy and jealousy could find a lodgement. His heart rejoiced in the success of the Gospel, by whomsoever administered ; and there is no doubt that if it had so happened that his opposite neighbor had gathered more sheaves than he, the spectacle would have excited no emotions but those of joy and thanksgiving. This for his large, manly, and Christian heart. And then it must be added that he had a consciousness of his own abundant mental resources, and had no dread of competition from any quarter. Concerning his large success in the noble art of Christian persuasion, the multitudes to whom he ministered can bear abundant testimony. It was the one aim of his ministry to bring his hearers to a resolute and final choice of a Christian life. And in the final reckoning of the outcome of

human lives, who can doubt that a goodly throng whom he instrumentally led into the kingdom of God will rise up to call him blessed?

A closing word to this utterly inadequate record shall suffice. At different times during that discipline of physical suffering, which extended over a period of years, it was my privilege to interchange visits with my brother, and to witness his brave endurance of faith. One memory is vivid beyond any other, and it calls up the form and face of the sufferer twelve years ago—perhaps a little more—when he spent a Sabbath with me in my home on the Hudson. I could scarcely believe that I saw before me the same man whose hand I had so often clasped in brotherly fellowship at the West. Some lurking vampire had drunk his blood at the fountain. How faded and withered were the cheeks, how feeble and shrunken the limbs! But there was not a sign of despondency in word or demeanor. On that monumental Sabbath day, when he should have been in bed, he was in my pulpit preaching the word of life with all the old fire and freshness. I suppose there was not an hour of that day which did not herald its advent and its ending with a pang. And from thence onward to the end, of which I received the sad yet joyous tidings over the sea, he was, with interruptions not long, a martyr in the furnace of physical pain.

Summoned to help him in pulpit labor two years since in Brooklyn, during a brief parenthesis of exile in Europe, I found him prostrated by his old foe, and, in the midst of parxoysms of anguish, uttering not a word but those of resignation and hope. And that was the last time, and I crossed the ocean again; and while the waste of waters divided us he crossed the river. Farewell, brother beloved! God will give to those who were blessed by thy life a great congregation, of which I would be counted an humble member, the joy of meeting thee again! Would that to-morrow were to be the day! But thou, brother, hast taught us patience, and we will wait.

I am, dear friend, with deepest sympathy in your bereavement,

Sincerely yours,

J. Leonard Corning.

From the Pastor of Centenary M. E. Church, Chicago.

My Dear Friend, Mrs. Helmer:

I shall always esteem it as one of the great blessings of my life that I was permitted to know and to be intimately acquainted with your dear departed husband. My own life has been made richer and better thereby. Our acquaintance began, I hardly know how; for from the first time we chanced to meet in this city, some ten years ago, we both felt that somehow there was so much in common between us in thought and feeling and work that we were as old friends, and needed none of the formalities of strangers. The recognition was instant and mutual, and from that hour we were not only friends but brothers.

It is true that we were members and pastors in charge of churches in different denominations—he a Congregationalist, and I a Methodist—but that mattered

not, and seemed lost in the broader and deeper life of the soul where we were one in the love of God and man. And I think we never afterward referred to the fact of our peculiar church relations, save in some way of suggestion or possible helpfulness in our one work of trying to make the world better.

In January, 1874, along with Professor Swing and Drs. Powers and Matthews, we became associate editors of the *Alliance*. We entered upon this work, not after personal conference and comparison of views, nor from any pecuniary motive or expectation, for the *Alliance* began with less than $500 capital; but from the simple feeling that such a paper might be made useful, and the agreement verbally sent from one to the other that we would individually serve on condition that all the others would do the same. And all of the five being busy, each one wrote what to him seemed proper, and the paper ran along in this way for six weeks or more before we came together at all. After that we generally met once each week, and, without the least compromise of principle or of loyalty to our denominational relations, we found ourselves in the most perfect accord in the spirit and work of Christ. So far as the public mind was concerned, those were stormy days—the days of the temperance "crusade," and after that of the "Swing trial"—but with our little group in the office of the *Alliance* there was always the most perfect accord. And I know that I but express the judgment and speak the heart of that little group of workers—only two of whom are now in the city—when I say that we all felt that Mr. Helmer was one of the clearest and ablest writers on the staff, and that he was so unquestionably true and pure and noble in spirit as to be absolutely above anything little or unfair, and that his kind, manly and genial nature did much toward making such a union possible. His whole life and culture were cast upon a plane so high and refined, and he was so deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ, that, like Him, he felt the burden of the world's sorrow and sin, and counted it a joy to labor and suffer that others might be blest.

It is, my dear friend, a very great pleasure for me to recall these pleasant reminiscences of the life of your dear husband. I would place his life and memory amid all that is dear and sacred in my own life. And yet, as I write these words, I can but mourn the loss of one I loved so well, and with whom I spent so many pleasant and helpful hours. Together we and our families—alas, the sorrows that have come to us all since then!—traveled amid the wild grandeur of the Rocky Mountains; together we bowed at the altars of prayer, far away and near. In my own pulpit he preached the word of life. And Mrs. Thomas and I know, too, something of the unspeakable loss to you and your dear children, in the separation that death has wrought. But for you and for us, and for the many, many friends to whom his life was so great a blessing, his going away has brought nearer the bright and beautiful future, and has opened wider the gates to the land that is better. That God may greatly bless you and your dear children is our prayer.

Affectionately,

H. W. THOMAS.

CHICAGO, February 23, 1880.

From the Rector of Christ P. E. Church, Bridgeport, Conn.

My Dear Mrs. Helmer:

My acquaintance with your late lamented husband, which began soon after I removed to Chicago in 1868, ripened fast into an intimate friendship. I was prepared to like him before we met, for I had been favorably impressed by some of his writings which had fallen in my way, but I did not dream of an attachment that would become so precious. Our parishes were in the same neighborhood about Union Park. For some months after the great fire my congregation worshipped in his church Sunday afternoons, when I was accustomed to see him in his study after our service. We were associated editorially on the *Alliance* newspaper. We assisted in founding the Chicago Literary Club. We travelled together with a select party to Colorado, and we were often in company at social, philanthropic, and religious gatherings. We left Chicago about the same time, but kept up an occasional correspondence till he was prostrated by his last illness. It would be strange, with these opportunities, if I did not come to know him well. And now, what shall I say of this stanch, true friend, when so much crowds on my mind and fills my heart?

First of all, let me note that he was devoid of those eccentricities that bring some persons of inferior merit into prominent notice, and by which they gain a reputation for talent that they do not deserve. There was nothing one-sided, affected, or sensational about him. His mind and character had a symmetrical balance and vital excellence that gave a quiet dignity and sweet influence to his life. He was natural, simple, and genuine in manner and speech. His presence impressed one with his candor, sensibility, single-mindedness, true manliness.

But withal he was very positive. He had decided tastes, clear convictions, deep-rooted principles. He was prompt to show his sympathies when the occasion required, and would give, without hesitation or confusion, a reason for his opinions and conduct in any emergency. But with this firmness of character he was free from intellectual narrowness and conceit of attainment. There was a largeness in his mental and spiritual calibre which made him hospitable to truth and goodness, whatever their relations or by whomsoever disclosed. His sympathies were as wide as humanity. He saw through the affectations of spurious scholarship and piety. Nothing was more offensive to him than ecclesiastical arrogance, the pride of office, the arts of the time-server. He did nothing for popularity, said nothing just to win applause. He had a noble sincerity, a fearless intrepidity in the love of righteousness that belong to the strong, pure soul.

As a companion he was genial, animated, fluent, and instructive in conversation, with flashes of humor that were as natural as his breath. He never monopolized the talk, but showed that fine sense of fairness, that ease and interest and self-command which are the charm of good-fellowship. I shall never forget the many conversations with him on all sorts of subjects which come within a scholar's range; and his remarks on society, government, nature,

literature, science, and religion always had a flavor, an illumination, that made them refreshing and delightful.

Mr. Helmer was a true lover of nature, with a poet's heart and gift of expression. In some branches of natural history he was much interested. Indeed, the first time I ever saw him he was on his way to the woods for the study of botany and ornithology. In our rides and rambles in Colorado I discovered more than ever before his passion for natural scenery. His delight in the gigantic mountains, the magnificent sunsets, the wild rivers of the rocky gorges, the sudden tempests, the illimitable landscapes of that wonderful region made my own happiness more intense. Among other memorable days, the one we spent in the famous Cheyenne Canyon has special vividness for the sustained and solemn joy and religious awe which he betrayed while we communed together in that majestic cathedral in the heart of the everlasting mountains.

Mr. Helmer's literary accomplishments were admirable. He had given himself severe discipline in the composition of verse, and there are poems of his that are valuable contributions to our literature. His knowledge of the standard authors was extensive—he greatly enjoyed good books—and he knew where to look for the most inspiring and edifying compositions. He wrote prose with fluency, and in a style of graphic vigor and precision. His contributions to the *Independent*, the *Advance*, the *Alliance*, and other journals show the clearness of his mind and the felicity of his treatment of a wide range of topics. He lived well abreast of the thought of his time, and there were few subjects of importance to mankind that had not attracted his interest and consideration. In whatever he wrote he had a definite object in view, and always appealed to what is worthiest in the heart.

He was a preacher of uncommon originality and power. There was a freshness and vitality in his discourses and an ease and heartiness in their delivery that made them not only attractive, but that carried to the hearer a spirit of helpfulness, conviction, consolation. His matter was always well digested, he had his points well in hand, and spoke from a large experience, and with the sincerity of a man who was about the Master's business. I always felt, after hearing him, that he went to the heart of the subject, treated it fairly—that he was a true prophet of the Word. He was not a man to ignore the intellectual difficulties of the sincere inquirer, nor to misjudge the various frames of mind that are induced in different individuals when exercised in the sphere of religious inquiry. He well understood the undercurrents that work in the minds of men, and with his strong convictions and comprehensive intelligence was prepared to minister effectively as a preacher for the times. His work, as we all know, was successful. He loved it, was devoted to his profession, and labored valiantly till he succumbed to inexorable disease.

As a theologian Mr. Helmer was well read, but he was the slave of no system. He sought truth humbly in the Bible, with the best lights for its interpretation that were available. He seemed to me to be without ecclesiastical prejudices. On essentials he was strenuous, but he was liberal in his views, where latitude is synonymous with enlightenment and good sense. The great thing with him

was to reduce the principles of the Gospel to practice. To get men to be Christ-like was his ambition, and to this end his labors and studies conspired.

His piety was simple and unaffected. He hated cant of all sorts, but was quick to detect and appreciate the vital Christian spirit under any form. He was generous, sympathetic, devout, and zealous in all benevolent undertakings. His fortitude in trial, his patience and faith in the midst of the inroads of disease are best known by those who saw how bravely he endured, and how sweetly he composed himself in the everlasting arms. I was a witness to something of this spirit before he left Chicago, for there, at times, he was sorely smitten.

I have given now but a meagre sketch of this brave, true-hearted man, this gifted scholar and dear friend and faithful minister and servant of Christ, as I knew him in the days that come no more. Though human sympathy is unavailing in such a sorrow as yours, I mourn with you and the many who are bereaved, and lay my simple tribute with the more expressive offerings which loving hearts bring in memory of his name.

HORATIO N. POWERS.

BRIDGEPORT, February 7, 1880.

From the Pastor of Central (Independent) Church, Chicago.

MRS. HELMER:

The report has reached me that you yield to the wish of friends, and will soon publish a volume of sermons in memory of your noble husband. I should love to add my petition to this common request.

It was my lot often to meet Mr. Helmer while his home was in this city and, such was my admiration of the literary and religious style of his sermons that, although my home is far removed from the church where he preached, yet I quite often gave up a Sunday evening to the long journey, knowing that the discourse would reward the seeker. All he said was fresh and strong and true. He saw all divine things through the peculiar light of his own mind, and he generally gave to all listening clergymen a sermon or two besides the one he was preaching. He suggested like music.

Full of the power to awaken others while he lived, his discourses, coming to us in a volume, will again awaken the heart, for to the admiration his friends cherished for him while he was here will be added now that power of friendship which comes from his grave—from the sad thought that he has gone into the mysterious country. They will not only be good words in their own right, but they will help the memory to recall a man who was an honor to the pulpit, whether we think of the great powers of his mind or the tenderness and justice of his heart.

With kindest wishes, your friend,

DAVID SWING.

POEMS

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

SIMEON TUCKER CLARK.

WITH

AN EDITORIAL PRELUDE.

PRELUDE.

The sacred trust, devolving on the editor of these poems, was imposed by the lamented author on one, who has no other fitness for the task, than his steadfast love for his friend, and a tender appreciation of his work.

The delicate office of editing the Poetical Remains of Charles Downes Helmer, is not that of scattering flowers over the resting-place of a sleeping son of song, or of twining a wreath of bays and amaranths about the brow of a victorious poet's statue ; it is, rather, the unveiling to the tearful gaze of his friends, a perfect model of his own soul, sculptured by himself.

During the latter and best part of his life, there was a mystical, conscientious love for the ministerial work, and a veneration for the great Head of the Church, that rendered his sermons, pulpit addresses, and even his written theological essays, in his mind, so much a union of the human and the Divine, that he quite refused to acknowledge any of these as specimens of literary composition, and lost all personal pride in them as an author ; but his poems he felt he might claim as his own, without any trespass on his holy calling, and with the ambitious love of genius, he sought the rhythmical form of expression, not alone because he could create, but for the love of creating ; and when in his own severe judgment, or that of his friends, these creations, like the dry land and sea of old, could be pronounced "good," he, too, looked upon his own work, and "behold, it was *very* good."

The writing of verse was his only recreation from the tedium of the onerous life-work, which he felt rested upon him by Divine commission ; and although he held this gift as something apart from his professional life, yet, so wholly sanctified was his entire nature, that his songs preached as truly as his sermons.

The great army of verse makers are led into the field by their admiration for the poetry of others ; reading much of verse, and appreciating how much above all other pursuits the work of the poet

is, they are hungry for the great praise awarded to real poets. Many mistake in themselves the appreciation of the poetical for the creative power, and so launch out on the sea of song, to flounder awhile on the surface, and at last betake themselves to the prosy shore they never should have left, or sink into the sea of oblivion, unknelled and unknown. Not so the author whose work we are now considering. He never was a reader of poetry. I doubt if at any time during his life he could repeat, verbatim, a hundred lines of poetry not his own. His reading was history, biography, philosophy. His favorite authors —Plato, Bacon, Coleridge, Macaulay and Shakespere; and he was largely indebted to all these sources for his most adequate forms of expression, his polished and effective style as an essayist. But when he sought for poetry he went to the fountain head; and his poems were the direct reflection of Nature's teaching to his own inner consciousness. She called to him with her innumerable voices, and he echoed her call—*the answers were his own.* The muses touched him with their invisible wands, and his sensitive spirit responded to their tenderest touch. His poetry was untrammelled by art; it was not art concealed, it was the unadorned beauty of natural musical expression.

The choir of American singers have sung less in unison than the modern poets of Great Britain. Circumstances have not created Laureates for us, and having no pronounced model, every particular and distinct voice has its imitators among the poetasters, and many a reputation, far greater than our author has obtained, has been gained by tolerable apers of Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Holmes and Poe; but such reputations have been local, and their permanence is still to be determined.

The place which we accord to our Poet is emphatically his own. He sang with a distinct voice, not of large compass or well cultivated, but true in pitch, effective and distinct. Whatever he sang was original, and whether piped or harped, the organ gave no uncertain sound. The singer first found his voice when but a child, in a wild and picturesque portion of the Empire State, and he sang as independently, as if no other poet had ever responded to the *genii* of the rocks and rivers, mountains and meadows; and he sang what he heard, without fear or favor, and many a rugged and halting piece of verse, whose rhythmic inaccuracies would seem to demand its immolation in the waste-basket, would appear in the poet's corner of the

New York Post, although the Nestor of American verse presided over its columns; nor shall we hesitate to praise unscanable lines when indorsed by the scholarly Bryant, who almost twenty-five years ago wrote, unsolicited, the following autograph letter:

New York Dec. 12, 1855

Dear Sir:—

I have read many of the poems of Mr. C. D. Helmer, and think very highly of his poetic talent. I am informed that he contemplates publishing them in a volume. Should he do so I am confident that the collection will do him honor and be creditable to the literature of our Country

W. C. Bryant.

The hand of Death glorifies all that it touches, and it has but lately been laid upon our friend. He has passed on to join the Immortals, and is so far from mortal praise or criticism, that it matters nothing to him what place he may be awarded among our lesser bards; but it is a matter of importance to true poetic art, that all productions laying claim to be artistic, should be carefully compared and classified.

No more delicate and ethereal creations are found in Shelley than Helmer's "Passing Cloud." It is an apology for the existence of the purely ideal life, unequaled in the language, and will be read sympathetically by those who have heard themselves condemned as useless cumberers of the ground, because they were unfitted by nature to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

One of his earliest compositions was a five-act drama, entitled "Lady Jane Grey." It was not wanting in merit as a study of character, and was minutely faithful to history.

His "Lyre of Hesperus" is a superb amplification of the text—

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way!"

It was read before the Alumni of the University of Michigan.

Mr. Helmer wrote nothing from the deeper affections, and, knowing him to be the most loving of all human hearts, and a sincere mourner for three beautiful children, I once ventured to question why he never made his lost darlings the subject of a poem? He answered: "I have often attempted, but my tears put out my pipes." I have no doubt of the truth of this assertion.

"The Beautiful," his Chi-Psi poem, and "The Stars and Stripes," his Phi-Beta-Kappa poem, are published in full in the succeeding pages, with the best of his miscellaneous contributions to the New York *Post*, *Independent*, *Courier* and *Advance*. At this point I desire to assure those who are now familiar with Mr. Helmer's published verses, that all the corrections, changes and additions were made by himself in his lifetime, and such manuscript as has never before been printed has received only clerical correction.

The great work of CHARLES DOWNES HELMER, however, is the poem, "The Spirit Masque," from which we have made copious extracts. This poem abounds in beautiful passages, but the theme is a very difficult one; in fact, the machinery of the poem is involved,

the progress of the story lagging, and the action of more than four thousand lines is attempted in a single terrestrial night. Had the talented author lived he might have curtailed, abridged and condensed the matter into a thousand lines, and the "Spirit Masque" would have been the peer of "Festus," to which it has a faint likeness. In point of imagination and creative force, it has few superiors in the language. This is the argument:

The visible and invisible make up the universe, or, in another phrase, the material and spiritual are the sum of all things. From the remotest antiquity men have believed in a spirit-world; but this invisible sphere has been enveloped with impenetrable mysteries, which have served to stimulate human curiosity, and because the present hour is all which is granted to finite knowledge, men have longed to know the future. Moreover, human life is everywhere puzzled with unsolved enigmas.

The construction of the poem is threefold. The course of superstition is represented as the fundamental idea. Side by side with this lies the development of Truth, ever progressing in spite of the temporary obstacles of Error. And, as a third phase, human life is presented in order to exhibit the palpable effects of these antagonistic forces. The first is the power and kingdom of Darkness; the second is Light, its perpetual opposite; the third is the actual field of conflict.

The *dramatis personæ* may be divided into three classes: the spectral legions of superstition, who hold their revels and devise their schemes in the realms of night; they include all such imaginary creatures, dreamy phantasms and shadowy illusions as have ever haunted the soul in the glimmering twilight of its existence. Truth and her pure spirits hold sway in the antagonistic world of Light. The third is the human element of the poem, in which three mortals represent the varied workings of the mind under those opposite influences.

In this poem, Mr. Helmer found ample room for the exercise of his large constructiveness, and his soul, essentially aesthetic, moved freely through a plane of action only circumscribed by the axiom that Imagination, not Reason, creates. It is the work of a born idealist, and in such remarkable passages as "The Birth of Astrology," "The Doom of the Sun," "The Prayer for the Earth," etc.,

the author compels the admiration of all who read, and the verdict of the discriminating world will be that a true poet has added his burden of prophecy concerning the unknown, and that as an artist, whatever Charles Downes Helmer has lost in the absence of technical finish, has been amply compensated for in idylic, unstudied freshness and spontaneous individuality.

S. T. C.

SCENES FROM "THE SPIRIT MASQUE."

SCENES FROM "THE SPIRIT MASQUE."

DIALOGUE OF GHOSTS AND DEMONS.

CANTO I., PAGES 4 to 7.

1st Witch.—On a green grave I sat and hummed,
While the dead Drummer wildly drummed;
Rub-a-dub-dub! What a charming sight!
To see those dead hands drum at night.

2d Witch.—Round the world, and about the world,
Through cloud and rock thrice three times whirled,
I chased a Comet with blazing tail,
And just when the startled East grew pale
I caught a spark from the fiery train
As it vanished beyond King Charles' Wain.

3d Witch.—Don John, asleep, was snoring loud,
Dreaming of grave, and pall, and shroud;—
I marked the meaning of his look,
My magic bridle o'er him shook,
And while the midnight echoes rang
Through creaking windows lightly sprang;
When fast, as sweep the winter gales,
We flew o'er mountains, streams, and vales,
And lighted on an Indian steep,
Where rolled below the hollow deep.
And taking a spider's fragile thread,
I wove it in his curly head;
Then down a thousand fathoms dropped
His gasping body, till it stopped,
Suspended by the tiny string,
And dangled like a lifeless thing;
Then broke his dream to see him stare
With terror at the vacant air.
O, the frolic of a merry night,
Haunting Mortals with dire affright.

Demon.—I have walked through the earth,
Where the Death and the Birth
Of those Mortals each other chase
In a most fantastical race.

I found idly wandering
A weak-willed one, pondering
His fate, or his destiny,—
Shadowed by mystery,—
And straightway I led him—his eyes
Rolling wide, through the skies—
To a precipice verge,
Down which he tumbled,
And the hollow pit rumbled,
While his fat carcass sunk ne'er to emerge.

Wizard.—I fashioned a spell
For the Spectres of hell,
In the secret of secrets,
That no one may tell.
Aha! huzza! huzza! aha!
For a spell, a hell-born spell!!

Ghost.—All night stalked I round a lonely tomb,
Not a spire of grass nor a flower in bloom,
For me to tread down, and I chuckled to see
Poor mortals, all panting aghast,
Look back from their flight at dread me,
Standing white in the cold whistling blast.

Spectre.—The wind blew bleak across a drear moor—
A night for haunting and lure—
The clouds, black and broken,
Did seldom betoken
Where wandered the moon,
With her silvery shoon
Like a beam of moonlight, now here, now there,
I sported along the lone waste,
Fright'ning Mortals, whose up-starting hair
And swift heels took precipitate haste.

Elf.—With jetty curls flowing,
And cherry cheeks glowing,
A beautiful maiden reclined
On a bank violet-lined;
Like a half-sleeping dove,
She was dreaming of love,—
While her mantle of hair
Was afloat on the air,
Which I twisted and snarled,
Till, like elfin locks gnarled,

They hung tangled and crost,—
Nevermore could the maid
Weave the amorous braid,
So her love, it was lost—it was lost!

Devil.—What a Devil can do,
I dare not tell you,
For he peeps and he pries
With his hell-lighted eyes,
Dragging down mortals,
Essaying the skies,
To perdition eternal,
And torments infernal.
See! see! what bold Devils be we!

Voice.—Thus speak the Ages, as they roll away;
As counted ages on yon little sphere,
That, spotted, cloud-enveloped, full of dreams
And knotty mysteries, which Mortals dread,
Circles upon our venerable realm.
Hence flew our minions o'er the manless Earth,
With spectral visions, and to hang the sky
With omens dire and sights appalling Time,—
To seize the mystic horoscope of heaven,
And write, in constellated characters,
The doom of nations on the glittering arch.

CONVERSATION OF A MORTAL WITH HIS GUARDIAN ANGEL.

CANTO IV., PAGES 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

Divinest Form
Of beauty, grant me now thy gracious leave,
To utter what my longing soul suggests;
For in thy presence strangely does my mind
Along the orbit of the past run back,
To find where we have learned this sympathy,
Which, like some most familiar memory,
Pervades my being when I look on thee.
On what bright shores of childhood did we roam
Together, twining round our infant souls
Affection's golden bands; when every hour
Of time was like a magic tree, whose boughs

Hung bright with fruit of joy, which we did pluck
Each moment for our hungry hearts, but soon
As plucked another growth more beautiful
Already wooed our eyes? and thus we grew
Congenial and suffused with sympathy,
Like two twin stars with orbits parallel,
That shine and roll and sing a million years
Together in the skies. Such scenes to thee
Does memory unfold? Or must we go
Far backward to some dim experience
On other spheres than this, before this life
Appeared to us, as to a traveler's eye
Some blooming garden suddenly is shown?
Illume this dim remembrance of my soul,
That seems a world of brightness to conceal,
As brilliant gems are covered in a cave.
I know some past companionship was ours;
For every ancient and familiar thought
And feeling rises in my pensive heart
At sight of thee; and images appear,
Whose presence bears the current of my thoughts
Far backward. Tell me, goddess, whence we are.

Voice.—I am thy first of kin; and at thy birth
Within my arms I took thee, while thy soul
Was all susceptible to every touch,
And breathed in thee the spirit of my love,
Vowing to thy creator, that henceforth
My presence should attend thee through all time;
That never in thy wanderings should aught
My image from thy mind completely rase.
And this has haunted thee.

Wyll.— All beauteous One!
I glory in attendance such as thine,
And pray thee never from my view to take
Thy presence fair. But wherefore are these chains?

Voice.—This may not now be all revealed to thee.
Enough for thee to know that other powers
Have gained dominion o'er the human world,
Which they shall sway until my hour has come;
And then its state my glory shall resume,
To give mankind the life of liberty,
Which might be soon, were not the serpent-race
Of sin such subtle masters of the heart.
When I am loosed, thy soul will I uplift
To heights untrod.

Wyll.— Then shall it be my life,
To study some deliverance for thee.
Command me what to do—what scheme to try—
What power invoke. My love exceeds all pains.

Voice.—Thou canst do much; but all is not with thee.
Mark now my words. This stream whose downward way
Through shady banks runs winding many a league,
At length divides, and round an island throws
Its liquid arms. Upon that isle of green
Three stately trees, of equal symmetry
And kindred form, in graceful arches three
Unite their lofty branches o'er a pool.
Beneath the centre of the arching trees,
Suspended by a silvern chain, you find
A golden spear, whose potent magic touch
Dissolves these fetters—and my limbs are free.
To gain this spear I long have sought, but found
No mortal who would venture that long way,
And risk the stream, and dare the dizzy height.
But should you bring the shining weapon thence
To set me free, then will I lift thee up,
Before the gladsome nations of the earth,
And they shall greet thee through the years to come,
Shouting—Behold the Champion of Truth!

Wyll.—I go, my Queen, though not for man's acclaim,
But for thine own imperial beauty, which
So charms my soul that life has no delights
For me, until thy liberty is won,
And I can love thee free.

THE DOOM OF THE SUN.

CANTO II., PAGES 14, 15, 16.

Mag.—About thee gather now thy blazing robes
Of fire, and lay thee down to endless sleep.
For now the ages of thy rolling course,
In which thou scared'st the ghosts among the clouds,
Or in the air, or gliding on the earth,
Through lonely desert places to their haunts,
By ill-timed rising in the gaudy east,
Are numbered all and passed. No more shalt thou

Molest the mighty rites of demon, elf,
Or reveling witch, by rolling o'er the world
Thy hated light, while frantic spirits hie
Beyond the confines of thy sway. No more
Shall midnight Murder wipe his reeking blade,
And flee with winged heels thine opening eye.
No more shalt thou the morn, or even, bring
To Mortals; but around the rayless earth
The pall of everlasting night enwrapped
Shall give to demon, spectre, goblin, ghost,
A veil for their enchantment and their forms,
Unspied, unpenetrated, undisclosed.
The Moon, with pallid lip and waning form,
Shall look for thee among the wondering stars,
And cry aloud through all the universe—
My Father, oh, my Father! whither strays
Thy flaming chariot along the skies?
But thou, enshrouded, coffined, palled, in deep
And ever-during gloom, no voice shalt heed.
Thy temples, which accursed men set up
To worship thee, shall see the beard of age
O'ergrow their crumbling walls, hearing no sound
Save that of self-decay; while altar, priest,
Emblazoned robe, and flaming tapestry,
All decorations, idol ornaments,
And blinded multitudes of worshipers,
Shall be but dust, which Sons of Darkness set
Their thrones upon. No more shalt thou the clouds
Illume, or deck them with thy gilded pomp,
Forever rolling, darkling through the sky;
But on their rayless pinions ghosts shall ride,
And throned upon their dusky folds convolved
Terrific demons cut the haunted air.
The troubled winds along their beamless paths
Shall howl, and storms grow black with hidden rage,
Without the hope of dawn; the lightnings shrink
Aghast at their unwonted, burning glare,
While thunders bellow through the sunless vault.
Now is begun the universal reign
Of Night upon the Earth, to Sorcery given;
And in the spectre-ridden clouds on high.
All Hell beneath is moved with joy to see
The rites of this annihilating hour—
To see this ancient enemy go down,
With flaming pinions shackled, to the grave.
No more upon the mountains of the east

Standing, shall he his golden trumpet fill
With morning echoes, waking drowsy man ;
For Night is veiling Time with mysteries,
And hanging curtains round the whispering earth.

UNITY OF LOVING AND BEING BELOVED.

CANTO IV., PAGE 13.

The thing we love we take within the soul,
And link it with our own existence there,
And bid our thoughts through all the hours of time
Twine fragrant wreaths around the blending twain—
The loving one—the one that is beloved
Until the mingled beings are but one.
We live within, and there we truly love ;
And never will our life be what it ought,
Until we quit this dungeon of mere sense,
To rise where things unseen inspire the mind—
The only inspiration of mankind.

BIRTH OF ASTROLOGY.

CANTO III., PAGES 12, 13.

Days, months and years, these marvels still returned,
While things of earth familiar grew to sense :
Man touched them and their veils of wonder dropped.
But overhead the eye alone could rove ;
And thought perplexed still bred perplexing thought,
While things intangible grew spirit-like,
Inviting man's imagination on.
He lay upon the hills, in pensive mood,
And made of heaven a thing fantastical,
To gather secrets from the far beyond.
Henceforward stars were oracles, and men
Among them ever thought to lose those doubts,
That must forever wrestle with belief.
Earth slept forgotten with her vast unknown,
While thought went roaming through the fields above
And now you tread these ancient ways again.

Dup.—Could I have lived within those primal days,
When time came walking down the stars from God—
When angels sat upon the mountain peaks,
And watched the infant race, I would have learned
From lips celestial secrets most profound.
The superhuman should have been the theme
Of heavenly eloquence. It is too late!
Alas! that sin should have arisen then
To smite the earth and shut the doors of heaven—
Flinging a thousand shadows o'er the world.
But what my powers inferior cannot, cope
There are who can, and them I now will seek.

PRAYER FOR THE WORLD.

CANTO XV., PAGES 14, 15.

And now Almighty Maker of the worlds
This wandering orb within my hands I take
Amid the universe—before Thy throne
And, lifting it, Thy benediction crave—
Imploring that the lightnings of Thy wrath,
Which have so justly lashed its guilty sides
Within the shadow of Thy throne, again
May sleep, while Mercy from the open heavens
Pours out from golden urns the light of Truth,
To purge forever all its sinful stains
And leave it flooded with celestial beams.

APOSTROPHE TO THE EARTH.

Thy purity restored, roll on once more
Thou smiling penitent among the stars;
Upon thy lips another song I breathe—
Thy wailings hush and bid thee to thy hymns.
Now onward with thine atmosphere of light
Far streaming, like an angel's shining locks,
Obey thy Maker, while around the sun
Thou rollest, counting ages evermore.

Chorus.

Onward now the world is whirling,
  Sunward turning in its flight;
Round it golden clouds are curling,
  Gilded with celestial light.
Round the sun
It shall run,
  Shaking from its sides the night,
Like a hungry beast of prey,
Clutching still the captive day.

But the dreary night of error
  Never more shall spread its gloom;
Never shall its hideous terror
  Shake the mind with threatning doom.
By the truth,
Bright in youth,
  Thought—a saint from earthly tomb,
Has arisen to behold
Doleful darkness dim and old.

Worlds, through all our Lord's dominions,
  Roll about Him as the sun;
When the nations, on Truth's pinions,
  Have immortal glory won.
    With the rest
    Earth, now blest,
  Shouts through ether—it is done!
And on constellated cars
Marches with the morning stars.

THE LIVING ORACLES.

CANTO XV., PAGES 20, 21.

God never has
To man through Death addressed His words of Truth;
His oracles are living—nor has He
To less than angels given to come from heaven
With messages to men. And when His Son—
Eternal as Himself—fulfilling all,
Had sealed with blood His final Testament;

Bequeathing to the world enough of truth,
Of light enough the darkest soul to save,
And sitting in the midst of time full high
The burning sun of His eternal Word,
His angel messengers again He called,
And bade them fold their golden wings in rest
About His throne. Now shall presumptuous man
Find hourly passage through that hidden way,
Which angels tread with holy mystery
On high behest! Avaunt, such sacrilege!
This fearful wickedness and crime rebuke,
With holy indignation's burning glance.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

CANTO VIII., PAGES 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Right and left, demi-human,
Neither brute, man nor woman;
We can dance, we can shout,
We can chase the Nymphs about.
When the day has shut his eyes,
And the bat from cavern flies;
Then through copse and dusky hollow,
We the blushing Dryads follow—
Catch them in the dim recesses,
Hiding with their golden tresses
Dimpled cheeks and pouting lips,
Pressed by lily finger-tips;
While they shrink from our caresses,
And we steal the honeyed kisses,
Filling Satyr hearts with blisses—
As do odors wildernesses.
But our gentle moods are rare;
We can howl and we can tear—
Drink with Bacchus, fight for Pan,
Steal the herds from timid man;
Crown Silenus with green leaves,
Thresh and eat the harvest sheaves;—
Every mischief, revel, rout,
We are evermore about.
Right and left, demi-human,
Neither brute, man nor woman;
We our dances still repeat,
With our hairy cloven feet.

(*Fawns dragging in Duperan.*)

Dup.—Away ye human goats ! ye hoofed demons !

Fawns.—May it please thee, Mighty Pan, here is pleasure ;
We have brought a mortal treasure.

Pan.—What bring ye, Fawns, from yonder fields ?

Fawns.—A hoofless creature, whom we found
Chasing moonbeams on our ground ;
Upward human, downward too,
King of marvels in our view.

Pan.—Place him in that branching oak,
Where two strong limbs form a yoke ;
Thence he may be pleased to see
Something of our revelry.

Dup.—I thank thee, Demi-demons, for thy care.
(*Aside.*) I like not their sub-human look, it's base,
And does not argue aught of insight deep.
But being here, my prudence bids me learn
What these fantastic creatures have to do
On man's strange earth, where even the meanest thing
Some destiny in space and time fulfills.

Chorus of Sylvans.

Over the peak and down from the crag,
Slopes where the hounds are chasing the stag,
Hasten we Sylvans gathering near,
Soon as the piping of Pan we hear.
Ours is the couch where the whirlwinds sleep,
Coiled on the brow of the wood-crowned steep ;
There we have wounded the mountain boar—
There have we danced in the tempest's roar.
Sometimes we see the Oreads fair,
Braiding sweet daisies into their hair,
Sitting at sunset under the hills,
Down which are flashing musical rills.
When all our horns are brimming with wine,
Gather we then at the mountain pine ;
Bacchus rolls in on his dripping car,
Dancing, laughing, and shouting afar—
Crowned with his grape-wreaths, twirling his rod,
Looking the jolly red, reveling god.
Long in the moonlight drinking we stay,
Then fling our horns all empty away.
Bacchus rides on in his drunken car,
We to our dens by the morning star.

Dup.—The hairy demons of the woods are these,
Whose only glory is to howl and dance.
They image thus the baseness of a soul
To earthly passions given ; and making life
A beastly round of animal delights.
But whence such pleasant music ? Let me hear.

SONG OF PAN.

Awake ! plaintive strains
My bubbling reed o'erflows with love,
My tender reed complains :
My reed, that hushed the noisy court of Jove,
Now sings to nymphs and swains.

Apollo's golden lyre
Confessed my matchless minstrelsy ;—
Then woke the thrilling fire
Of amorous joy and music's ecstasy,
And every sweet desire.

Then bright-eyed Juno bent
Her swan-like neck and proud to hear :
The stately Juno lent
Her gracious presence and her raptured ear,
Till every sound was spent.

Attend, ye Nymphs divine !
From every grotto cool and hushed :
Bedew, ye sacred Nine !
My waiting lips with music's fervor flushed—
And make sweet Echo mine.

Of Bacchus, too, I sing,
Of spurting vats and clustering vines,
And Cupids on the wing ;
When Venus sighs, and Dian's crescent shines,
And Satyrs dance in ring.

THE BEAUTIFUL:

A POEM,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CHI PSI FRATERNITY,

AT

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.,

JUNE 6, 1855.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

Creation is a poem writ in rocks,
In mountains, plains and clouds, in fields and flowers,
By air and ether, motion, fire and flood.
By winds and waterfalls and wandering waves,
The song is sung around the rolling world,
While Time, upon the eldest star still stands,
And thence beholds the sands of ages run
As turns his dusty glass of centuries,
And present hours drop swiftly into past.

The Muse, aspiring to the Dawn of Things,
Comes back with baffled eye;
As drops the eagle from the sky,
Whose azure arch, with outspread mighty wings,
He, upward sweeping, strove to gain,
And pass the limits of his air-domain;
But waved his weary pinions all in vain.

Nor, on the dark and silent gate
Of earth's beginning placed,
In line or symbol traced,
Appeared the furrow of remotest date.
But in the gloom and mystery
Of night chaotic lay
A star of wondrous destiny,
Awaiting light's own day.
And time within the shadows dim
Of sunless dials slept;
The sands of ages mantled him,
As dust earth's Adam kept.
Around her heart of liquid fire
The world's Creator wrapped
Her granite mantle gray,
And robed her for the coming day;
The continents and oceans mapped
O'er all, while glad the angel choir,
Rejoicing on their starry thrones,
Creation chanted with seraphic tones.

The earth was round, and bright, and full
Of all things good and beautiful.
The angels o'er it came and went,
And God's love starred the firmament.

So rolled the earth, a star among the stars;
So fled dim chaos and primeval night;
And thus around its graceful disk was poured
The light created, like a sea of gold.
The fragrance of its summers filled the air,
That sighed in amorous breezes over fields
Of spicy boughs and scented vales of blooms.
Attending worlds, in orbits multiform,
With shining threads of light upon the sky,
The glittering woof of their bright history
Incessant wore. All this unheeded yet,
Save when some angel, wandering o'er the scene,
Above the mountains waved his waiting wing,
Or on the limpid pool delighted gazed,
And loved his angel shadow sleeping there.
The earth created like a temple stands
Sublime amid the stars, the radiant thought,
Made visible, of Him—The Infinite.
Its floor of living green, mosaic-work,
Inlaid with brightest flowers of every hue;
Its pillars mountains, and its dome the sky;
The shaded valleys are its spacious aisles;
Its altars grassy hills; the rolling clouds
Its incense-smoke; the oceans sacred fonts;
Bright silver chalices, the sunny lakes;
The dim and solemn forests, roofed and close—
Where holier light swoons in the holier shade—
Its chapels, filled with whispering echoes sweet;
Its pealing organ is the mighty wind,
With stops of thunder shaking earth and skies.
Within is seen no kneeling worshiper
At matin, or at vesper prayer, devout;
No ear to catch the wandering melody;
No eye to see the beautiful in form;
Nor heart to feel the presence manifest
Of earth's creating Mind.
A diadem upon creation's brow
Shall gleam. This Temple nations yet shall throng,
For He, who laid of old its corner-stone,
A living worshiper creates in man.

As when the gates of dawn, wide open thrown,
Admit the sun, so comes the human soul,
Resplendent, far beyond all else in time.

Hark! Angel voices cry
Out of star-towers dim and high—
"Pray, Spirit! Kneel and pray!"
While the echoes fill the sky—
"Pray, Mortals, ever pray!
At the dawning of the day;
Men and angels kneel and pray
Till in silence echoes die!"

And now begin the visions and the dreams
Of soul, by matter circumscribed and held.
Mysterious shapes, unutterably strange,
And voices, myriad-toned, from viewless tongues,
To eye, or ear, incessant move, or shine,
Or speak. Begotten rapture swells the soul,
And thrills of joy, unnamed and undescribed,
Through every nerve of being quivering fly.
Before the rapt immortal, Nature, thus,
Her glittering universe of things outspreads,
In pageants moving in the light of suns,
Attended with eternal harmony.
And as their forms, forever changing, fling
Upon the soul successive images
Of outward life, reflected to the thoughts,
A world of beauty wakes to life within.

Beauty! Beauty! everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air.
Bright it beams in every star,
Sheens the wheels of Dian's car,
Lights the diamond in the mine,
Snows the pearl beneath the brine,
Sleeps with flushed check in the flowers,
Sings among the summer showers,
Paints in moonlight dreaming lilies,
Gilds with sundown daffodillies,
Tints the veins of breathing leaves,
Pours the gold on harvest sheaves,
In the dew-drop sets the gem,
Studs the midnight's diadem,
Points the crystal stars of snow,
On the dark cloud bends the bow,

Flits with bright-winged butterflies,
Sails with clouds on summer skies,
Plays in meadows with the brooks,
Hides from sunbeams in cool nooks,
Sheds sweet fragrance on the breeze,
Paints on pools the sleeping trees,
Flashes in the sunset blaze,
Showers the night with silver rays.
Beauty, beauty everywhere!
On the earth, and in the air.

Incarnate soul, amid created things,
With eager sense surveys the universe.
Beneath the glittering heavens amazed it stands,
A trembling Danae, wondering at the sight—
While from the arch of stars a golden shower
Descends, and gems it with the Beautiful.
And life whirls on the bright machinery
Of earth, whose flashing wheels along the grooves
Of nature's laws with silver music sing.
The seasons with their changes; day and night
Their circles fill in sweetest consonance;
Up springs the sun, and in his flaming car
Leans forward, poising in the rosy air
His golden spear, and pierces flying night
That falls death-pale into the western deep.
Night's empire thus o'erthrown, the prison doors
Of darkness open fly, and glowing day—
Like some grand wizard in his magic realm—
His myriad wands of light darts through the gloom
Of forest, field and flood, touching the cells
Of worlds of happy spirits, waking now
To liberty and life; with wings in air,
Or fins beneath the sparkling wave, or foot
Upon the grassy earth, pursuing glad
The joys of morn's serene and dewy hours.
And now, above the mountains burns the sun,
Upon his golden sea of air upborne—
As floats a rounded isle of brightest flame
Along a deep of fire. Upon the top
Of Noon awhile the day-car seems to poise
Then down the western slope majestic wheels,
Impatient for the eve. And toward the west
The clouds, slow sailing, turn their golden prows.
Between the lofty hills long shadows creep,
Stretching along the plains their dusky lengths.

Against the evening sky the mountains lean,
And winds, that murmured in the nodding pines
An hour ago, now sleep on gilded boughs;
While sweetly rings within the glimmering wood
The song of nightingales. Another hour—
And sunset high upon the flaming west
Its painted miracles of Beauty hangs;
Like palaces of fire they seem to rise—
And castles bannered with a thousand flames,
That wave triumphant in the winds of light—
Unsteady as a vision's fickle scenes;
Till reeling wide their countless flashing towers,
Down toppling, into golden rivers melt,
And vanish flowing into shady lakes
Of cloud. Far round the clouds, like mountains piled,
Run threads of fire, that fringe their swelling forms,
Like lightning fixed upon the drapery
Of fading thunder-storms. And, dolphin-like,
The sinking pageant, with its dying hues,
Floats round the sun—which now with fiery eye
Looks level o'er the shining mountain ridge—
And now is gone. Slowly the vision fades,
While Evening's shadow gray falls dim and far
Upon the mountain and the sober sky.

The earth lies breathless, like a soul entranced,
Before whose sight a wondrous vision passed—
Uncertain what upon such gorgeousness
Shall next ensue. The very streams are hushed:
The air through all its hollow chambers rings
With tingling silence, like a whispering dream.
And darker as the mountain shadows fall,
And deeper grows the azure of the sky,
A single star comes out with cautious look,
And on the spotless blue his silver flag
Unfurls, the earliest sentinel of night.
Another, and another, from their tent—
The vast pavilion of the heavens—they step,
And lance their glistening spearlets to the earth,
Till all the hollow hemisphere of night
With glancing beams and flashing rays is filled,
That cross and mingle in the shining air,
And weave a veil of starlight o'er the earth.
Then on the east the clouds begin to glow—
As if a burning city, far away,
The shadow of its conflagration flung

Against the brightening heavens. The moon appears,
Arrayed in garments of the sheeny clouds,
Whose graceful train along the mountain sweeps.
And now the lofty huntress, Dian chaste,
Away her queenly robes disdainful flings,
And stands upon the gauzy eastern cloud,
Her radiant quiver full; and with her bow
Shoots bright and far on mountain, plain and sea,
A shower of silver arrows glimmering,
That spread, dissolving into argent mist,
A glittering mantle o'er the evening world.
The Night is wonderful and beautiful—
So still, and so mysteriously bright!
The shapes of earth seem floating in a sea
Of moonlight; and the shadows of the hills
And trees seem living things that walk about,
And whisper to the evening winds their love
Of silver-sandaled Nymphs, that on the pools,
And streams, and waves, sleep dreaming of the moon.
The midnight time, so strangely beautiful!
When mortals seem to lose their earthly forms,
And only soul in Nature's presence stands
Sublimed, and full of deepest awe and love—
And stars are reading secrets of the heart.

A dim and faded form within the west
Now lies the moon upon a sad white cloud—
A pale-cheeked maiden dying for her love,
So pensive, woe-wan, and so beautiful!
Above the fading gloom hangs tremulous
The Morning Star, and watches tenderly—
As waits at night about a dying one
A loving sister, pale and sorrowful;
And both lie shrouded in the morning light.
With forms of beauty, such as these, communes
The raptured soul, a day and night. But now
The year, when the winged seasons swiftly borne,
Amid revolving moons in endless change,
Move o'er the earth. First comes warm-bosomed spring;
O'er winter's drear dominion breathes her soul,
And from his grasp his icy sceptre melts;
Then stands she tiptoe on the showery hill,
Her dripping bud-wand waves around the south,
And calls from out their fragrant, sunny haunts
The melting breezes, which come panting forth
Among the joyous clouds. The waterfall,

Which voiceless hung within the crystal snare
From icy precipice, at spring's soft breath
Shakes off its glittering dream, and headlong leaps
Far down the mountain, with wild shouts of joy,
And songs of liberty. The brooks, their chains
Of ice dissolved, run laughing with delight
Around the fields, and kiss the grassy banks;
The yellow grass within the sun grows green;
The busy mill-clack sounds along the streams;
And forests spread abroad their leafy wings,
That only flutter in their wild delight.

Now beauty, dreaming in her curling buds,
Prepares a world of sweetest blossoming
To paint the light. The dandelion wakes,
And looks through golden fringes at the sun;
The daffodil, and crocus, and the rose,
With jasmines and the climbing eglantine,
Bright hyacinths and timid violets;
And, tinting all the air, spread apple boughs,
That shake their fragrant shower of blossoms down
On cottage roof and walk, and crystal spring—
And with a prodigality of bloom
Smother the perfumed gales. Nor sights alone,
But liquid music pours from every spray—
Life's joyous carols in the ear of spring.

Sacred Beauty,
Mystic Beauty,
Vernal Beauty,
Like a blooming Faery Queen,
With her spirits gathered 'round her,
Fays and Fairies tripping 'round her,
Dances in the gardens green.

Sacred Beauty,
Radiant Beauty,
Like the angel of the flowers,
Robed in rainbows—robed in dawn-red—
Bright and blushing robes of dawn-red,
Weaves rose-garlands for the hours.

Sacred Beauty,
Golden Beauty,
Like a daughter of the sun,
Streaming on the air her tresses,
Long and waving golden tresses,
Beaming smiles on every one.

Sacred Beauty,
Starry Beauty,
Like a glittering princess crowned,
Flashing in her robes of jewels—
Gorgeous robes of dazzling jewels,
Lights the earth with radiance 'round.

The earth and air are full of joy and life
And throbbing love. For all this gorgeousness
Is not a gleam of idle show flung out
In vain, or meaningless, on nature's waste.
It is the Beautiful deep hid within,
That with divine expansion swells the soul—
The fair twin sister of the Good, and veiled
In forms of matter sings to human hearts,
And waits to captivate and make divine.
This, innocence adores, and youth, that oft
In loving mood twine round their rosy limbs
And sunny hair bright wreaths of fresh blown flowers,
And dance on village greens in merry May ;
Or in the rural groves, while lovers walk
Along the dusky eve through dewy fields,
And talk of bliss, like heaven, in heaven-blessed hearts.
Upon her grass-green banks sits Spring, and toys
With sportive gales, that elf-like snarl her locks,
And then run laughing through the woods, or fly
Far up and sing among the clouds, till June
Amid a shower of roses coming, leads
The panting Summer to the fields. The fields
Are warm and heavy with their harvest hopes,
The clover meads lie pearled with morning dew,
Where early bees, with honey-laden thighs,
From bloom to bloom fly on with busy hum,
While butterflies on sunny daisies sit,
And fan their golden wings. On yonder hill
The mower briskly whets his ringing scythe;
And shepherds up the mountain path lead on
Their bleating train, and shake from drooping plants
The sparkling drops. Deep in the woods the birds,
In shades of dripping coolness, pour their songs.
The lazy clouds are sleeping on the sky.
By fountain gathered in the breezy grove,
Or standing midway in the shallow stream,
The herds seek shelter from the noontide sun.
The wary trout lies deep within the shade
Of jutting bank, or hanging rock, nor heeds

The drifting fly. The winds among the pines
Are hushed. The new-mown grass beneath the sun
Exhales delicious odors as it dies.
The cottage doors, wide open thrown, invite
From lake, or hill, or wood, each rustling breeze,
That floats on fragrant wing from cool retreats,
Where shaded fountains drip on mossy stones,
That never warmed beneath a wandering ray.
The yellow harvests ripen in the sun ;
And busy reapers gather golden fields,
While rustic Beauty, on the grassy knoll
Beneath the old oak tree, sits many an hour,
And braids the oaten straw, and sings her love.
The blazing day sets all the west on fire ;
Then rolls its flames beyond the hills of night ;
And in the summer evening, still and dim,
The merry spirits of the panting air
Their harmless lightning lances sportive hurl
Around and through the warm ethereal fields
With many a silent flash and startling flare.
The large, round, harvest moon hangs in the sky,
And sheds o'er all the earth a silver day—
The shade of that now fled beyond the west.
And briskly o'er the close-cut oaten field
The prelude to the cooling autumn gales
With voice of gentlest melancholy steals.

With glittering sickle and the harvest sheaf,
Upon her shoulders borne, far o'er the hills
With weary step, retiring summer goes,
Strewing her path with dead and faded flowers ;
And Autumn, laden with her mellow fruits,
On golden boughs, low-bending to the ground,
Walks through the arch of red September suns.
Her cheek of ruddy tan, grows beautiful
Beneath the kisses of the frequent breeze.
Leaf after leaf now drops its mantle green,
And flaunts the gayer colors of the bow—
As faded charms are veiled in brilliant dyes,
To hide the loss of maiden beauty's glow.
Tree after tree waves yellow in the sun,
Or spreads costume of purple in the wood ;
Hills redden—valleys catch the crimson flush ;
Forest on forest like a sylvan dream,
Through changing colors flash on autumn air.
And now a mystery of beauty comes.

The hazy air seems thin and liquid gold,
When Indian summer, baffling proudest art,
Returns as walks with blushes deep inveiled
A lovely lady wandering in her dreams;
Or, as bright memories of the golden past
Along the thoughtful mind, roll sunset hues
Of buried beauties, majesties and loves.
This ghost of summer through the faded field
Walks pensive in the dim and mellow air.

And Autumn pauses in her onward way,
In reverent attitude, before her steps—
Then moves again, and on her bosom wears
This likeness of departed radiance.

From fading earth to heaven transfer the view:
Like Beauty under golden-dropping skies,
The Night stands beautiful in meteor-showers,
As if the deep-blue arch were one vast cloud,
And all the stars were raining to the fields.
Heaven glitters—earth is dancing in the wild
And flashing vision, and the air is full
Of beauty, wonder, and untold delight.

Pale Autumn, with the fingers of the wind,
Swift snatches from the rustling forest boughs
Her purple robe of leaves, and wrapped about,
Flies shivering o'er the crisped and frosty fields.

At last, bleak Winter, on his snowy wing,
Shrieks wildly with the rugged voice of storms,
That fill the world with whistling echoes shrill.
Then comes a calm; soft from the dull white sky
The starry snow to earth floats silently,
And builds on branch, and roof, and tower, its forms
Of sparkling architecture, that far-flash
In morning suns a world of radiance.
The glassy ice creeps o'er the shivering streams,
Or hangs in gleaming pendants from the roof,
Or weaves with gems fantastic images,
To bind upon the brows of waterfalls
A blazing coronet of regal pride.
White gleam the snowy mountains from afar;
The forests stand in beauty unportrayed.
Throughout the cold and dreary night, now past,
The rain has fallen, freezing where it fell;
And in the early light of risen day

The trees are flashing like a fairy wood—
Each branch, and leaf, and twig, and mossy trunk—
Like shapes of crystal wrought divinely fair,
Wave realms of diamond splendor in the sun.

And yet again the night is wondrous bright.
Upon the north far up shoot spires of flame,
That, from the red horizon wide around,
In trembling brilliants lash the quivering arch,
Now rise and sink in rapid play of fire,
And gleam along the crimsoned fields of snow,
And flash around the iceberg pinnacles—
Till, sweeping with their fiery phantoms high,
They crown the midnight heavens with majesty,
With one immense and flaming coronet.
But Nature wheeling in her orbs
Of glory flashing splendor on the soul—
As nightly skies their starred magnificence
Flash round the blooming earth—exhausts not all
The Beautiful, for far within the bright
And ample aisles of earth's grand temple stands
An inner shrine wherein the human soul
Embodied dwells. It is the holiest place
That veils from common sight the mystery
Of spirit-life, that glows within sublime
With gleamings of Shekinah radiance.
It is the human form, the graceful crown
Of matters grand creation, gemmed and rich
With all the skill of Nature's Architect.
The Angels witness to its majesty
And veil their radiant presence, in its shapes
To walk the earth. But more than human soul,
Than mightiest angel more, creation's God—
The world's Restorer, stooping from His throne,
Has wedded Mortal Shape to Majesty
Of heaven, and Beauty of celestial grace.
Meet casket for the jewel of the soul!
So meet, that heathen ages wrestling long
With inward angel thoughts—God's own ideas
Implanted in the mind—have found, to give
An outward shape to spirit-images,
Naught better than the varied Human Form.
Erect, of unresembled front and brow
In living forms, with face to heaven up-turned,
And treading proudly on the planet earth,
The angel, it doth seem, whose presence binds

Our starlet to the living universe.
Together grace and strength lead wedded life;
But most of Beauty dwells in softer forms,
With virtue of transcendent womanhood—
The lovely angel-half of human kind.
Less human, more of spirit-like divine,
As if the fire of immortality,
That burns within, its radiating glow
Quite through her plastic outward shape had spread,
Refining every gross and earthly trace,
And leaving only the celestial tints;
Upon her cheek the rosy flush of dawn;
Her lips, bedewed with melting tenderness,
Are music-fountains, whence her deepest heart
In pure affection flows melodious;
With eyes, like crystal pools, through which the stars
Of love shine ever on this night of life;
Her gentle nature full of kindly grace;
Her soul all luminous with sympathies.
The moon walks beautiful on silver clouds;
The star of evening sweetly tints the west;
The flowers, that on the banks of shining lakes
In sunlight sleep, make earth a heavenly place;
But far transcending these, beyond the reach
Of all compare, is Woman beautiful.

Beyond the universe of matter dwells
The all-creating spirit, that informs
Each shape, and shines through nature's cloudy veil
As, through a deep eclipse, the darkened sun—
And makes and keeps all beautiful, that is,
And as all planets sunward tend, though kept
In orbits various by other power,
So turn the human thoughts this spirit toward,
While ever moving in the orb of things
Create and real to the outward sense.
And from this mighty love, this longing vast,
This infinite attraction springs to light
The world of Art that mimics Nature's world;
As we behold at night on oceans broad,
And smooth expanse outstretching wide below,
Another sky of stars within the deep.

The foam-born Venus from the sea
    Arose and touched the shores of blooming isles
With fairy feet and flashed divinity,
    In heavenly grace and starry smiles,

That by their magic beauty drove
All hearts to madness with the love
Of her; as starts the moon, bright seem
The isles of dusky eve between
And fills the glimmering archipelago
With forms of light and images that glow
With streaming radiance. So Beauty rose,
Resplendent o'er the isles of Greece,
And flung her glories on their dark repose—
Like rising moons out-glancing large increase
Of brightness—till the human soul
Upon the bosom of her soft control
Fell vanquished; but to be inspired
With powers that distant ages have admired.

II.

Then Art appeared with magic wand,
And smote the rock with skillful hand;
When lo! uprose a thousand shining forms—
As flowers shoot up when fields the summer warms.
They stood, like spirits lightning-freed
From dungeons, where the dismal deed
Of some Magician kept them bound—
A race of Beauty under ground.
And o'er the world were spread
The forms of Sculpture, while the mind
Of Genius ranged the universe to find
The semblances of thought. The dead
Then slept in glorious repose,
For o'er their ashes rose
Enduring monuments. Religion placed
Within her temples gods and mighty men
For worship. Fame her triumphs graced
With arch and column, where the chisel-pen
Wrote deeds historic for the eye
Of far undawned futurity.

Apollo triumphs in the sculptured stone,
And Niobe stands weeping sad and lone,
Great Jove majestic—like a statued hill
Hewed graceful by the artist's skill—
Outlives the faith of millions, now
Entombed beneath Olympus' shady brow,
Still Venus lives, and charms the human race
With all the potent love, that reigned
O'er man with golden links enchained—

Ere marble stole her living grace,
Immortal fame and freedom, right and truth ;
The dignity of age, the strength of youth ;
All virtues, graces, every passion—
The mystic world within the heart—
Expression found in halls of Art,
Where genius dwelt to form and fashion.
In sacred groves of green,
In cities walled on hill-tops high,
The marble multitudes were seen
In solemn stillness 'neath the sky—
A living, bloodless host they seemed,
Like risen dead that stood and dreamed.

III.

How glorious and how grand
Has genius made the path of Time,
The wayside filling with these forms sublime !
That proudly stand
On either hand—
The monuments of ages full
Of art-creations beautiful.
Not marble limbs nor attitudes of grace,
Nor snowy paleness of the sculptured face ;
But genius taught by nature's hues,
Made art-world glow with all the dyes
That God's created forms suffuse
Of flower, or blade, or sea, or skies.
The pencil dipped in rainbows fills
The canvas with madonnas, angels, gods ;
And painted cities rise from painted clods,
And streams that flash down fancy's hills.
Unreal warriors stalk on battle-fields
Without a trumpet tone or clang of shields—
Where death for ages dies, yet never dead,
And mighty armies, plains of silence tread.
All earth suggests, or heaven above,
Or hell beneath ; all thought invents ;
All starry mysteries of love ;—
The clouds, and seas, and continents,
From Art's pictorial walls forever shed
Immortal glories on the past and dead.

IV.

But while the eye grows lustrous with the sight
Of visions beautiful and bright,
The soul is wafted through the sky
On gales of sweetest harmony.
The world is full of melody ; the air
Floats round the singing earth on wings,
Whose every motion wakes the golden strings
Of Music, till creation rings
With gladsome voices everywhere.
When the moon her sky-mount climbs,
Trailing o'er the crags below
Silver garments full of stars,
Soft the echoed evening chimes
O'er the hills float sweet and low—
Sweet as song from angel-cars,
Bearing ransomed souls on high ;
Or voice of fairies when they lie,
By moonlight, in the harebells blue,
And sing amid the silver dew.
Or pealing through cathedrals solemn,
Loud anthems in the twilight arches ring ;
The echoes, lingering round each column,
With transport lift devotion's languid wing.
The lute in the bower wakens midnight's still hour,
The sea keeping time with its low-murmur chime,
And fountains that glance in their moonlighted dance ;
While Love lies awake,
And beams through his smiles,
Like a star on a lake
Unshadowed by isles.
And dirges come weeping, heavy and low,
With funerals marching to graveyards slow.
Or merrily, at the bridal hour,
The tones are all joyous and gay,
While sorrow and care are away ;
And music descends like a shower
Of sunlight on roses in bloom,
Out breathing a world of perfume.

Thus music has for all the soul's best moods
A voice, whose echoes sing along the way
Of life, through crowded courts, or solitudes ;
In Art, or surging Nature's music spray.
The waterfall, the wandering breeze

That sings among the dancing trees,
The gliding streams, the restless ocean,
The winds, and all their world of motion,
Upon the earth and through the roaring arch
Majestic move in ceaseless music-march.

V.

Of all the summer blossomings of thought,
Whose opening leaves have brightly caught
Celestial radiance from the sky,
The loveliest far is Poesy.
Her voice is like sweet music, heard
Far off through evening moonlight still,
Of spirit lyres, by spicy breezes stirred
On some untrodden, star-crowned hill.
Her form is like an angel, flying bright
Among the constellations of the night.
The sun himself has crowned her :
Amid the beautiful her throne
Is flashing, rivalless, alone,
In gold and diamond lustres round her.
As fairies, belting earth with wings
Of lightning, or 'neath ocean waves,
Or from the dim and jeweled caves,
In search of all most precious things.

Or from the track of wandering star,
Or the silver wheel of Cynthia's car,
Bring presents for their beauteous Queen;
So Poesy, from all things seen,
Or known or dreamed, has power to gain
Imperial splendors for her bright domain.
The earth leaps skyward at her voice,
And man feels something stir within,
That lifts his being o'er the din
And smoke of time: the nations then rejoice,
And follow up the Singer's way—
As starward still she goes,
And leads the race, where bursting clouds disclose
The glories of eternal Day.

And thus went forth these sisters four through space
And time, pursuing still the Beautiful.
To each there was a glory and success—
But not to all alike. And now had come

The hour for Coronation of their Queen.
Above the earth they rose upon a cloud
Of fleecy whiteness, fringed with sunset fire,
And hung sublime in mid-air o'er the hills.
First, Sculpture forth her glittering triumphs led
Upon the cloudy plain in multitudes—
As moves an army of the ghostly dead
On twilight shores of fabled Tartarus.
And these collected round, she reared on high
A pile majestic of her chiseled pride.
Symmetrical beneath the clustering stars
The structure rose, and flashed innumerous rays,
Like mountain icebergs in the blazing North.
Beneath her skillful hand it rose, and stood
Complete between the cloud and sky, a throne,
Immense and splendid, as the golden one
For queenly Juno built. This finished, next
Her ruddy Sister, whom the Colors serve,
Upon the spacious canvas of the air
Her pictured trophies hung in circuit large,
Unfolding scene on scene, till heaven was mapped
Magnificent with Art. Then Music rose,
And smote the harp of winds, and o'er the fields
Of air symphonious numbers rolled sublime,
Or surged in music-waves against the sky;
And rivers of angelic melody
Poured down to earth, till every echo hailed
The Queen of Arts who sat upon the throne.
In sweet repose, fair Poesy her strings
Attuned, and sang the triumph of the Arts.
She sang of men, and gods, and thoughts divine,
And hymned the Beautiful through space and time.
Along the air celestial accents rang,
And spheres, swift coursing, hush their silver chimes,
To catch the sweeter music of the soul.
And while the echoes billowed o'er the clouds,
The minstrel, like an angel, from her throne
Arose, and hung her lyre among the stars.

Thus have we traced the Beautiful in forms
Of Nature and of Art. But why the Soul
In Matter aught congenial to itself
Perceives, is not from shape, or outline fair,
Or graceful curve, or blushing hue, or all
That strikes the sense. It is the Infinite,
Whose spirit speaks through all created forms

To man, and with its bright attractions, thus
Forever strives to win his wayward soul,
And lead it back to life's celestial spring.
It is the Spirit, then, is beautiful.
Heroic deeds, supernal reach of thought,
The flashings of sublimest intellect,
All triumphs of the mind show Beauty's face.
But o'er the height appears a dome of stars,
Still unattained. As one who climbs the Alps
Sees mountains far below while yet above
Rise snowy peaks that flash against the sun;
So, over all, the *Moral* nature lifts
Its grandeur nearest heaven. Here Beauty dwells;
For Holiness—eternal Purity—
Is her resplendent robe, whose radiance
Outshines the sun. Mar but this purity,
And from a burning Seraph round the Throne
Falls Lucifer, black as a blasted star—
A sun eclipsed in hell's eternal night,
Where not a ray of beauty ever shines.
Who sees the Beautiful must have within
A purity of soul; for, as the heart
Of him who looks, so is the universe
He sees. If in him demons holds the sway
Of thought and feeling, then, the world without
Goes howling through a wilderness of nights,
Unguided, godless, lashed by lightning strokes,
And never in its flight beholding morn.
But give the soul to love, the heart resign
To that which is the essence of all good,
And every form at once gleams like a star;
And every ray of light has wings of joy;
And every pulse of being leaps with life;
The soul implores for power to grasp the world
With arms of love; and in its boundless reach
Of sympathy, the universe of good
Is beautiful, because all souled with Love.
The deity within replies, itself,
To deity without, and hence man feels
An universal fellowship with forms,
Through which the Beautiful interprets GOD.

The Beautiful! the Beautiful!
Its voice is in the air;
It blooms on earth, it shines in heaven,
And flashes everywhere.

Through morning red and evening gold
It waves its rosy wings;
On silver moons, on diamond stars,
Unfading lustre flings.

On valleys green, on mountains blue,
On fields of shining flowers,
It pours its streams of sunny gleams,
In rainbow-tinted showers.

The fountain drip, the ocean roar,
The winds among the trees,
Its voices are, whose melody
Is like enchanted seas.

An angel form, among the Years
It stands celestial bright;
And binds upon Time's chariot wheels
Its wreaths of rosy light.

It mocks at crowns, and sceptre pride,
And all the pomp of Wrong;
Its glory is the virtuous heart—
Its music, Freedom's song.

It whispers to the human mind,
And lifts its hand on high,
To lead the wandering nations on,
To wonders in the sky.

O'er smoking worlds, and dying suns—
That once in glory shone—
Above the crashing universe,
Unshaken stands its throne.

We love it, and we follow it,
Along its upward ways,
And then our spirit endlessly
Shall summer in its blaze.

The Beautiful! the Beautiful!
Toward GOD its splendors roll;
In *Purity* and *Love* it shines,
Eternal as the Soul.

SOMETHING TO READ.

Over the centuries, misty and brown
With the distance, like mountains afar,
Antiquity, throned as a star
The summits above, bends searchingly down
On our days her deep, wondering eyes,
That speak of a secret surprise.

The mystery is, that she hears,
Through her dust-covered ears,
A voice from these modernest years,—
If not very loud, yet not very faint,
But very much like a solemn complaint.

Somebody is sorry or sad,
For something undoubtedly bad
In these ominous times;
And whether it man is, or woman,
The Octave can tell—it is human,
And more is not needed for rhymes.

"Oh! for Something to Read!
An intellect hungry, and well-nigh sick
Of an appetite quite unappeased;
A brain, that is ready and quick
To swallow it, with a starving mind's greed;
Anything, anything, only be pleased
To furnish me Something to Read!"

A dearth! a famine! dreadfulest drouth!
No literature left—the streams
Of authors dried down to the stones,
The fountains of books quite run out;
Libraries wasted and worn to the bones,
Skeleton book-cases ringing with screams
Of their shelves, that are empty and starving,
And, in their despair, almost gnawing the carving,
That had, in the builder's intent,
Only the aim of ornament.

"Give me Something to Read!"
Says Miss Nancy De Vowrer,
"Something, you know, that is nice,
Mr. Bookseller, but nothing to make
A young girl's poor head ache;

For the girls are agreed,
That headaches, of any device,
Induced by a book that is deep
In its meanings, are always a shame
To a woman—far better let sleep
From the dream-land of Dullness o'er-power her,
Than come to endure a Blue Stocking's fame."

Now, Miss Nancy had given a look,
For two long weary hours,
By the clocks on the towers,
At every genus and species of book
On the shelves and the tables :
She had read all the names,
And the titles printed in gold,
On the backs of the covers,—
Tomes of history, volumes of fables,
Books with an April Fool in their labels,
Chronicles outside misleading to games,
Author's editions, that never had sold,
Stories of pirates, and stories of lovers,
Ponderous works on Theology,
Written when people had leisure
To read something more than *Tribune* or *Times*,
Some copies of modern Geology,
French novels, and soul-harrowing dramas,
Essays on Taste, Art, Manners and Pleasure,
Lives of the Martyrs, Saints, and Grand Lamas,
With meek, goodish Sunday school tales ;
Lives of the Presidents, records of crimes,
Catalogues and lists of "Trade Sales,"
Some Lectures, Orations and Sermons,
And Ossa-on-Pelion rhymes ;
The culture of Greeks, and the lore of the Germans,
Legends of Red Men, Minister's wooings,
Transactions, or minutes and doings,
Of everything under the moon ;
Travels in Africa, romances of Passion,
Translations from Arabic, Celtic, and Rune,
Books on Behavior, and Essays on Fashion.

And yet, not a book to be found !
Nothing to read ! some were too dry ;
Several ancient, and thus out of date ;
Multitudes stupid, and some too profound ;
These make you laugh too much, those make you cry,
Some are too little, and others too great.

Thus disappointed, and heavy of heart,
And sighing over this famine of books.
Miss Nancy, with grief in her looks,
Disgusted and weary, turns to depart.

She had done so before,
In her hunger for reading ;
But now her despair was exceeding,
As she swept toward the door,
Not a book in her hand,
Though with plenty of money, any book to command.

Old Homer looked down from the dust
In his niche, as anyone, blind,
And reduced to a bust,
Might be supposed to look down
On disappointment like Nancy's,
With a bronzed expression, as kind
As well could comport with a frown,
That either was Fancy's
Creation, or born of disgust.

Unlikest his nod, the Homeric eye
Has majesty in it and might ;
And when its poetical light
Comes flashing down from the glittering sky
Of Genius, bestudded and bright
With Antiquity's stars—
You might think it was Mars.

There is power in the rays
That fall from the sun, moon or planet,
That flash from the blaze of lit oceans,
And shoot from the dome of mid-summer days ;
But yet there is a power far greater than it,
That hides in the thought-lighted gaze
Of live eyes ; and, that, without notions
Or whims, still the human soul sways.

The look of the world, the eyes of the race,
Attentively fixed on the face
Of one's fame, how they can make the cheek burn
And glow with a conscious delight,—
Or, possibly otherwise, make it turn
Pale, with apprehension's own white !

Suppose all the stars in the skies
Were truly the earth-searching eyes
Of angels, and that the all-seeing sun
Were the eyes of the Omnipotent One,
Looking down on mankind,
Every day, every hour,
Who would not rather the heavens were blind,
Than live under the rays
Of that all-penetrant gaze,
With its terrible power?

'Twas Homer—or, rather, his bust—
That, we were saying just
Now, sent such a wondering look
Right down on the lady herself,
Who had searched every shelf
In vain for some readable book.
For well the old Bard remembered the time,
When Libraries lay in Futuro,
When Literature yet had no bureau,
And books were as precious and rare,
As Genius and Koh-i-noors are
In our day; back in that misty beginning
Of pen-worship, ere the spider-like spinning
Of volumes commenced from the bowels
Of brains, that made Solomon sigh,
While weary and sad he pensively penned,
Among other truthful avowals,
The fact that there cometh no end
To the making of books—if they are many,
Though the authors themselves may die
Unburdened by fame, unharmed by a penny.

And remembering well that beginning
Of things, when he made his own verse;
And (what we should say is no worse—
Whether blind bard or not) did his own singing,
To people who never had read
A stanza or sentence, never had seen
A book, though with eyes in their head,
His anger grew flamy and keen—
To hear of starvation where now
His bust, with its laurel-crowned brow,
Looked down along glittering aisles
Of gold-titled books in marvellous piles.
I do not think it was all the clerk's fancy;

And if it was not, then surely Miss Nancy
Went out of that door,
As never before,
Pursued by an old poet's gaze
Of astonishment—lit to a blaze.

She had struck the hard street
With her pattering feet,
Each moment forlorn and forlorner
Of heart, as she sighed for a book,
And wondered, if possibly yet in some nook,
Or hid in some dusty, dim corner,
The treasure might still not be found:
And now had resolved to turn round
And try it once more, when lo! just as
She turned, who should flash on her eye
But her brother, the modern Augustus—
He of the miraculous tie—
And member of the Toilet Adjusters.

With a significant toss of her head,
Indignant and sad, "Oh, brother!" she said,
"The age is ungallant and mean,
Nothing like it ever was seen,
Chivalry's dead, no lady can find
A volume to read with comfort of mind;
Indeed, there are books enough
But full of such learn'd stuff,
That to read them would make me stone blind."

Now, Augustus had knowledge,
For he was a man—a masculine brain;
At least, if not masculine, male,
And he had been to college.
You know, to be caught in a rain
Refreshens us sometimes, when brooks
And fountains no longer avail
To quench our thirst with legitimate drink.
So, minds may be caught in a shower of brooks
At college, absorbing a little,
Of course, though they neither study nor think,
Nor care for instruction a tittle.

Well, Augustus had been in that rain
For four years—and got mentally damp;
A very considerable gain
For one not wholly a scamp.

Nor does it deserve to be doubted,
That, under such showers,
If he had any powers,
The bulbs of his intellect sprouted.

Augustus had finished his studies
Entirely before he came out of the halls
Of learning, and he turned from those walls
Completely accoutred
For life's future calls,
Assured, as many a young blood is,
That, Professored and Tutored,
Diplomad, and lawfully graded,
His mind with wisdom was fully pervaded.

No wonder his sister should look
To him for a readable book;
For must he not know
Everything pretty and witty and rare,
From Publisher's Row,
Or from Printing House Square?

"There is old Isaac Walton's 'Own Angler,'
But you are a woman, you know,"
Said Augustus, "A Dead Shot" by Mangler;
But ladies abhor lead and powder,
And never would fish—but for Chowder.
And there is a book by De Foe,
But too stupid to ever get through;
Some stories by Dickens—only so so,
And Thackeray wrote a volume or two,
I believe, that might possibly do,
Were it not, that the plot
Excites one too much, when the weather is hot.

"Everyone knows Sir Walter Scott,
Who wrote very cleverly,
Some novels called Waverly,
But nobody reads Ivanhoe now;
Those stories are all out of date,
Too long for our times, anyhow,
And length in a book is what I most hate.

"There's Pioneer Life by Christopher Carson,
But too backwoods and rough;
And something, too, from some country parson,
If anyone cares for such stuff.

Of course there are histories, poems, and such
  Compressed and solid productions,
That sensible people never will touch,
  So long as anything else can be read;
  I would as soon think of racking my head
With Logic, Greek Grammar, or Fluxions.

"You certainly do not want Travels;
  For what is the profit of knowing
What other men see, or say that they see,
  In Ashango-land, or any land else,
  Among Hottentots, Chinese, or Celts?
Whatever they are is nothing to me;
  But there is some sense in one's going
To witness the feats of the Ravels.

"Bacon and Ruskin, Hugh Miller, and Buckle,"
(Augustus went on with a chuckle)
  "Spinoza and Shakespeare, Plato and Milton,
Agassiz and Humboldt, Spencer and Mill,
  With hosts of others who only have built on
Their betters, and multitudes still,
  Who deluge the world with their science
And learning, sufficient to fill
  All sensible minds with disgust of their books,
  Would turn life into stone with Gorgonean looks,
  Were it not that we bid them defiance,
    By persistent refusing
To read anything, not short—and amusing."

But all books are not mummies
  Enveloped in dust,
  In spite of Augustus' disgust;
Nor are libraries nothing but pyramids.
  But of this whole matter the sum is—
  There must be live eyes in the eyelids;
For glass might be painted quite eye-blue,
But never can let the bright sky through;
  Talk to a blind man of mountains,
  Or to a toper of fountains,
And, nine times in ten, he will stoutly deny you.

It is said that the tomb of a saint
  Being opened long after,
When all dusty, and grass-fringed and browned
By time's universal and durable paint,

Within the enclosure were found
Neither ashes nor bones—
But all over the stones
Were fragrant and beautiful roses,
That turned tears into laughter
Of joyous surprise; and so, it may be,
That old books are not tombs,
But shut chambers of blooms,
And that the dust-covered volume encloses
A garden of beauties immortal,
If one will but enter the portal,
Having a spirit with eyes that can see.

But our thoughts would be futile indeed,
If we ever expected to find
Those people, anywhere, inclining to read
The pages of old Aristotle,
Who care less for the mind
Than they do for the cork of a bottle;
Who vote Plato a bore,
Flinging sneers at his lore,
Which they, to be sure, have studied no more
Than Aztecs or Apes have, but who effect
That deep and difficult knowledge
Acquired in Bacchus's College,
Of all the various species of drink,—
Can tell famous brands at a wink,
But would sooner die than reflect,
And count it a vulgar attainment, to think.

And some who are feminine,
(That means a woman
In this case—a genuine
Daughter of mothers—
No counterfeit true man,)
Though not like their brothers,
Who patronize cellars and corks,
But standing so high in the civilized spheres,
Refined and so polished by culturing years,
As never to dine—without forks,
Affect to despise all earnest-souled people
Who come, at their birth,
Down to God's real earth,
And enter on life as a real affair,
With something to do, more than wheel in the air,
Like giddy-brained-figures perched on a steeple.

Well, specially, what can a woman do?
For is it not masculine,
To strive for honor and win
The difficult prizes of life?
The feminine nature—does not it eschew
All manner of contest and strife.

There is Rosa Bonheur,
To be sure, who certainly fair is,
And queen of the artists of Paris—
With garlands of glory upon her;
And ladies unnumbered
Besides, who lecture and write,
Make books, and make statues,
With vigor proclaiming their right
To do what they can,—if they choose—
And certainly be less encumbered
With prejudice, laws, and that mote
Of all wrong that forbids them the vote.

But Nancy is clearly not Rosa,
In character, motives, or views,
Any more than Beau Brummell's Spinoza,
Or any two else that you choose.
And, so, it becomes rather hard,
For ladies like her, or men like her brother,
To find proser or bard,
That can please either one or the other;
Nor would it be worthy of blame,
Perhaps, to say even the same
Of either their father or mother.

The God of this world is, no doubt,
The same that we sometimes call Mammon—
The patron and sovereign of gold—
Religiously served by many who scold
Their fellow for doing the same, and scout
The idea, that his godship's service
Is anything better than gammon,
And say what his zealots deserve is
The fate of King Midas: but while this god,
With sceptre of gold, and tyrannical rod,
Rules the race—even those who affect
To despise him—still you everywhere see
How money-bags covet the higher respect
Of learning, and plainly agree,

That books are, at least, a prime luxury,
If not quite essential ; as no one can be
Truly genteel, with the upper-rank classes,
Who does not possess more books than the masses.

Accordingly, and to be in the mode—
A willful imperious need—
The family mansion, high-built,
That serves as a winter abode,
Must have a fine library—not to read
You perceive, but bound with morocco and gilt
In elegant rose-wood book-cases,
Constructed expressly, in antique styles,
And fitted exact to their places,
To render imposing the glittering piles
Of volumes, that money can buy
In thousands, or acres, in tons, or in miles,
No matter how long, or how high,
Or how heavy, the only condition
That limits the purchase at all is—
The upholsterer must get the edition
In Turkey Morocco, gilt-edged, and fine
As any that ever was seen to shine
At Harper's, or Field's, or Macaulay's.

A maker, like Him who in glory hath made
  All things that are, since Creation began,
  Subordinate maker of things is man ;
A builder, on whom the Omniscient hath laid
  His hands, with Divine inspiration,
Ordaining him, thus, with genius and skill,
  And sending him forth to creation—
A worker, to plan and construct, at his will.

A builder has man been, since Abel
  The righteous, was brutally slain,
  And skill took its line of descent from Cain ;
Has built him tall towers, though thwarted at Babel,
    Built cities and monuments,
Prisons for crime and fanes for devotion,
  Mansions for pleasure, and walls for defence,
And vessels to traverse the ocean—
  Structures of beauty, and structures immense ;
    But nothing so truly sublime
    Hath ever been builded in time,
As Libraries—those cities of Letters,

Or unsmitten Babels of genius and lore,
The temples of wisdom, or arches
Of learning's great triumphs, where marches
Forever the Captain of Thinkers before
His grand army of readers, who wave
Their bright banners, and fight for the slave
Of error and ignorance, smiting his fetters
With blows, like the blows of the hammer of Thor.

No wonder, then, that money should covet
The splendor and honor of wit—
So loftily lifted above it :
And so, the De Vowrers saw fit,
Like thousands of others, to gild
The fine gold of mere wealth with the lustre
Of letters ; and being unskilled,
As judges of authors, what could be juster
Than seek, for the purpose, some one quite equal
To all emergencies bibliothecal ?

The edict goes forth—the order is law :
"Buy me the volumes, and fear not to draw
On my banker for any amount,
Expense is a thing of little account ;
The inside of books I care nothing about,
They never were meant to be read—
At least, not to bother my head—
But, mark you, they must be splendid without.

"In general, perhaps, I might say,
Just to make it not seem all display,
There should be a little regard
To the chance, that a scholarly guest
May happen along—so get me the best
Looking ancients, critic, or bard ;—
But anything else—by the yard.

"There should be a row, too, of Britain's great poets,
To give it a look of true culture and taste ;
A shelf of philosophy, science and art—
With holiday binding, imposingly placed ;
For always, in matter like this, you know, it's
Important to play well your own part
In Fashion's great game ; and Custom demands,
Say, nine full yards and a quarter of fiction,
And eleven square feet of clear history,

Besides a few volumes from foreign lands;
Though German's a lingual mystery,
And French an imported diction,
No library would ever be thought complete
Without, at least, a dozen good feet
Of both these popular tongues,
To strengthen by exercise Fashion's weak lungs."

A show, a pomp, a gilded parade
Of letters and learning, is easily made—
With gold in one's hand;
The books may be piled from carpet to ceiling
In costliest covers, yet ever revealing
The fact that the volumes, in livery, stand
Memorial piles of prodigal pains,
To buy, at a price, the glory of brains.

Meanwhile, the mental starvation
Continues, this wide-wasting famine
Of books for unthinking people to read—
Apparent to all who examine.
But pitiless authors give it no heed,
While publishers merciless smile at the need,
And, through all the world, with mighty conflation,
That looks like collusion,
The makers of books, of various names,
Are blowing, together, the high-mounting flames
Of thought-smelting; the intellectual ores,
In white-heated fusion,
Commingle and sparkle and glow,
Till ready as water to flow,
And a stream of editions steadily pours,
In rivers of paper and leather,
Far down to those gilt-lettered shores
Of oceanic libraries, in whose dead waves
The books and their authors, together,
At last are permitted to sleep—in their graves.

THE BATTLE OF ORISKANY.

Beleaguered men of Stanwix, brave as those
Who faced a million of their foes
At old Thermopylæ;
Good cheer to you upon the wild frontier!
For citizens in arms draw near
Across Oriskany.

But hark! amidst the forest shades the crash
Of arms, the Savage yell—with flash
Of gory Tomahawk;
For Johnson's Royal-Greens, and Leger's men
And Brant's Red Fiends, are in that glen
Of dark Oriskany.

From down the valley, where the Mohawk flows,
Were hurrying on to meet their foes
The patriot yeomanry;
For Gansevoort within his fortress lay,
In peril and besieged that day,
Beyond Oriskany.

As men who fight for home and child and wife,
As men oblivious of life
In holy martyrdom,
The Yeomen of the Valley fought that day,
Throughout thy fierce and deadly fray—
Blood-red Oriskany.

From rock and tree and clump of twisted brush
The hissing gusts of battle rush—
Hot breathed and horrible!
The roar and smoke, like mist on stormy seas,
Sweep through the splintered trees—
Hard-fought Oriskany.

Heroes are born in such a chosen hour;
From common men they rise and tower,
Like thee, brave Herkimer!
Who wounded, steedless, still beside the beech
Cheered on thy men, with sword and speech,
In grim Oriskany.

Now burst the clouds above the battle roar,
And from the pitying skies down pour
Swift floods tumultuous;
Then fires of strife unquenched flame out again,
Drenching with hot and bloody rain
Thy soil, Oriskany.

But ere the sun drew toward the tardy night,
The Valley-men beheld the light
Of freedom's victory;
And wooded Tryon snatched from British arms
The empire of a million farms—
On bright Oriskany.

The guns of Stanwix thunder to the skies;
The rescued wilderness replies;
Forth dash the garrison!
And routed Tories, with their savage aids,
Slink reddening through the sullied shades
From lost Oriskany.

Behold Burgoyne! with hot and hating eyes,
The New World's flag at last o'erflies
Your ancient Heraldry;
For over Stanwix floats triumphantly
The rising banner of the free—
Beyond Oriskany.

A hundred wondrous years have passed since then;
And hosts now rally there again—
To crown the century:
The proud posterity of noble men
Who *conquered* in the bloody glen
Of famed Oriskany.

THE FLAG OF OUR COUNTRY.

My country! country still, though deeply gashed
With bleeding wounds—by traitors made;
Yes country still thou art, though rudely dashed
Thy cup of peace, upon whose brim once flashed
The gems of glory, now is laid
All empty in the dusty battle's shade.

My bleeding country! once so free and proud;
So beautiful among the nations then,
Resplendent in the light of liberty;
Now darkened by the fearful cloud
Of war and shaken by the tread of men
To battle rushing vengefully;
Oh! country, God to baptism calleth thee.

Thou art the country of the free;
Thy God is consecrating thee.
And now, once more, the Font of blood is brought;
Behold the crimsom emblem, oh, how red!
Jehovah pours it on thy sacred head.
This holy service is not done for nought;
Prepare thee for the labor to be wrought.

And, now, the sacred Flag He dips;
The Stars and Stripes He plunges deep
Beneath the surface, thence to lift
The consecrated banner up the steep
Of War's wild heights; and lo! it drips
The blood of heroes, while pale lips
Still whisper to it through the swift
And angry clouds of battle, as they sweep
Athwart the fields, with here and there a bloody rift.

Oh! consecrated country, rise!
Uplift thy sacred banner to the skies!
Go forth to fight;
Defend the right:
For twice ten millions of the bravest brave
Will gladly fill for thee a bloody grave.

Oh, consecrated banner, wave!
Above this land without a slave;
When freedom's risen gun
Beholds her mission done,
And wide athwart America her light
Pursues the shadows of oppression's might.

We have a country still—
That country has a right to live;
Let those forsake its cause who will,
There are yet chosen ones, whom God will give
The glory of defending it;
Whose names shall glow on marble columns high,
Whose fame shall be as lasting as the sky,
While years are wide extending it.
Our country has a banner, too,
Of heaven's own stars and heaven's own blue
In streams of light combined;—
That flag is in our hearts enshrined.

Our country's banner—God defend its stars,
In sacred union blent!
Our country's hopes, our country's life
Are one with it, through all the whirls and jars
Of civil discord and rebellious strife,
Let not one shining fold be rent—
Preserve the Union from dismemberment!
Oh! Sun refuse to shine
Upon the nation wrecked, upon the heap
Of ruins from the Union strewn.

Oh ! stars, withhold your beams benign,
And in eternal darkness weep
About the sun's forsaken throne,
If ever falls our country from its bright
And high career to anarchy and night.

Nor let the glory from our banner fade,
Till dies in heaven the sun's last beam;
Nor let a single star expire
Upon its folds, on high displayed,
Till those in heaven forget to gleam;
But coexistent burn their kindred fire.
And through the dawn of coming years shall rise

New stars to shine upon our banner's crown,
As States, begotten from our empire vast,
Ascend to places on the Union's skies;
Till flings our larger constellation down
Its beams, more splendid than illumed the past,
Upon America and o'er the world;
And millions yet unborn shall see
Our banner, more effulgent still, unfurled
Above a wider realm of liberty.

This banner was the standard of the brave,
When first it rose above the battle's gloom:
It shaded Washington in death;
Its folds have drooped o'er many a patriot's grave;
It floats above the cradle and the tomb
Of every citizen, while Freedom's breath
Still tosses it on many an airy wave.

Then take this banner ! bear it forth
Through East and West, through South and North;
Let every star be bright,
And pure the Red and White—
Through battle storms, on bloody fields,
With God and Freedom for your shields.

What though the wild and dismal night
Of war enshrouds? behold the light
That through the fading darkness streams,
With unextinguishable beams,
From out the Stars and Stripes; no gloom
Like this can be the country's tomb.

These clouds shall pass, this storm shall cease,
And leave the shining sun of Peace

To light our banner still—
If such be God's dear will;
And high our Starry Flag be borne,
Though in the storm of battle torn;
No star erased,
No stripe effaced,
Its folds in glory only furled
Above a free and happy world,
Amid the splendors of the earth's millennial morn.

CERES.

I dropped a seed-corn in the mold,
From which the sun had kissed the cold,
One dallying May;—
I hid the gold grain in its tomb,
All wound about with dust and gloom,
And went my way.

A Crow looked from an oak-tree's crown
With cunning caw, and feigned frown,
Then took his flight.
The Sparrow chirped; the Robin sang;
The woods with Spring's glad voices rang;
The sky rained light.

Each day the sun walked through the fields;
The stars, by camp-fires wide revealed,
Stood sentinel;—
And from the clouds, to cheer the flowers,
The resonant rain in shimmering showers
With music fell.

Then came the minstrel winds of June,
With many a mystic dance and tune,
At eve and morn;
The Sprites strung pearls of dew, and made
A necklace for each tender blade
Of baby corn.

But onward, from that burial day
Serene of soul I went my way,
With scarce a thought
Of what might come from that which lay,
Like buried light in dead, cold clay,
Nor answer sought.

I knew the kernel there must lie
And perish ; for except it die
    There could not come
Another form of life and grace
To fill the crumbling cereal's place,
    And so was dumb.

I knew that Nature would be just,
And trusting sun, and rain, and dust
    A little while,
Could wait in patient hope to see
What Autumn would give back to me,
    And waiting—smile.

Out of the blade start stem and ear,—
The tassels float, the silks appear
    To cheer our eyes ;
Till rustling voices from the field
Cry, "come and gather in the yield
    Of earth and skies."

And lo ! instead of that lone corn
I planted on that radiant morn,
    Stand clustering ears ;
And from their folds of bronze, unrolled,
I see a hundred grains of gold
    Gleam through my tears.

LOVE AND LIFE.

The streams and tides have each their wonted course ;
  The vagrant winds some whither blow ;
All moving things, by seen or unseen force,
  Still in some fixed direction go.
But whither flows life's devious stream
  Impelled beneath or from above ?
Forever, when we do not dream,
  We living live for what we love.

'Tis love propels and steers the golden bark
  That bears us on o'er time's rough waves
Through all the distance from the dawn till dark,
  Between the cradle and our graves.
Love gives the fireside all its glow,

To labor lends a patient force;
And from its roots will purpose grow
And pure ambition take its course.

We live for what we love—for this alone;
Our hate repels, dislike is death,
Despair, like winds from Arctic mountains blown,
Doth freeze us with its icy breath,
When love, the sun of life expires;
We stir no more, we live no more,
To ashes turn our strong desires,
And droops each power that wrought before.

Oh! wondrous, mighty love, of life the heart;
Whose pulses drive the vital tide
In all-impelling streams to every part
Of man's large nature vivified,
Transfigured and o'erruled by thee
As empires by a sceptered hand;
Thou sittest on high all royally,
Subduing worlds by thy command.

THE CROW.

Feathered with the plumes of night,
Draped in darkness—craped in black,
All the bird-hues thou dost lack
That can give the eye delight;
Nor in thy voice
Can I rejoice.
Hoarse, on high, hallooing—caw! caw! caw!

Robber, thief and jabbering jade,
Glutton, tyrant, every name
That can hateful traits proclaim,
Is on thee dishonored, laid—
Thou voracious
And loquacious
Bird of blackness, cawing—caw! caw! caw!

What begot the settled scorn,
Heard in thy derisive tone,
Flying flocked, or flying lone,

Crawing carrion, cropping corn?
Who loves your broods
Within the woods?
Yelling their bombastic—caw! caw! caw!

Never from thy turgid throat,
As from Larks and Orioles—
Birds with music in their souls—
Comes one sweet or dainty note
Of melody;
No! not from thee,
Screaming from the tree top—caw! caw! caw!

For life's sweetness hast no song?
Or art thou a Bird of Doom,
Winged and wandering type of gloom,
Symbolizing human wrong?
Emblem, token
Of right broken—
Mocking us by croaking—caw! caw! caw!

Larks, that soaring skyward sing,
Goldfinch, Robin, Nightingale,
Telling spring their love's sweet tale,
All bird-beauty borne on wing,
Mankind admire,
And many a lyre
Crowns with song; but not thee, yawling—caw!

But while partial Bards refuse
Music garlands for thy name,
Justice lays on thee no blame—
Nor will any generous Muse—
For plumage black,
Nor for the lack
Of sweetness in thy clanging caw! caw!

Those who serve their nature's law,
Living out their life's design,
Earn a place in honor's line—
Sparrow, Eagle, Skylark, Daw,
Or Cockatoo
In gold and blue,
Or blackest Crow that bawls his caw! caw!

DANDELION.

Tooth of Lion? Thou art not;
Be thy namer's name forgot!
Thou meekest, sun-crowned king of humble flowers,
Spangling, with stars of gold, the Spring-green robe
Of meadows, brightening under vernal showers;
Not least of blooms that beautify the globe.

Looking on thy sun-bright face—
Sure to shine in every place
Which more ambitious blossoms proudly shun—
Insensible to merit must they be
Whose admiration is not strongly won
By all the worthy qualities in thee.

Bold, yet modest to my sight,
Brimming with the sunniest light,
Unlike the human world's self-seeking crowd,
Thou art content with Nature's lowest rooms,
Bearing thy generous blossoms where the proud
Dare never go—thou democrat of blooms!

Scorn thy beauty, whoso may,
Child of Spring's auroral ray;
While all unselfishness is fair to see,
While gifts and graces, shining for the poor
And lowly, serving them in charity,
Still lovelier seem, thy glory shall endure.

Single, or o'er grassy roods,
Marching gold-helmed multitudes;
When sprinkling splendor round the paths of Spring,
Or carrying cups of golden Summer light
Down into Autumn's dying fields, a thing
Art thou that none but shallow souls can slight.

And, when from thy cup a-tilt
All the yellow light is spilt,
No earthly death is thine; but, as saints die,
The old man, Pappus, thin of hair and gray,
By zephyrs borne to some congenial sky,
Transports new life to regions far away.

TENT AND MANSION.

"For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—*2d Cor. v : 1.*

Within this tabernacle thin and frail,—
  Whose curtains flutter
    And flap in every gust,
And rattle to the rain and hail,
    And darken with the dust,
  And shudder when the thunders utter
    Their voice,—we dwell forlorn,
    Waiting, in hope, to be re-born.

We dwell forlorn :—and yet would be content
  In this low dwelling,
    Whose august Architect
Himself up-bent the firmament
    Above us, star-bedecked,
  And breathed the winds around us, swelling
    Their organ-tones of praise
    Through arching aisles of NIGHTS and DAYS.

A voice from Heaven, like a silver trumpet, cries :
  "Know well, Good Mortal—
    Housed in your earthly tent—
That here above your clouded skies,
    In Paradise all bloom-besprent,
  A House you have, with pearl-bright portal,
    As lasting as Eternity,
    Which God, the builder, built for thee."

Foundations hath this Mansion, large and deep,
  And walls, unshaken
    By all the rush and rage
Of worlds, that down to ruin sweep,
    When God concludes their Age ;
  For on the Rock divine, unquaken,
    This heavenly house eternal stands,
    Where Angels beck with snow-white hands.

And that is home—forever with the Lord ;
  There flows the River
    Of Life through greenest fields,
Where winds and waters in accord

Make music sweet ;—there yields
The Tree of Life its fruit forever,
Whose healing branches overspread
With genial shade the Risen Dead.

But here we groan ; our heavy hearts bemoan
Their burden-bearing,
And build, this tremulous Tent—
Here pitched on wilds of thorn and stone—
Wind-smitten, worn and rent,
In ruin flat, that, skyward faring
Our spirits, freed from dusty death,
Might breathe in Heaven a living breath.

THE HARMONY OF NATIONS.

In the mythic times and olden,
Rocks adored Amphion's lyre,
When his music, sweet and golden,
Thrilled their deadness with its fire.

From the quarries in the mountains
Forth the charmed fragments rolled,
Softly as from grassy fountains
Waters filled a marble mold.

Not a sound was there to render
Building tedious to the ear ;
While the city rose in splendor,
Silent as a dawning sphere.

Thus, the Theban city's story
Still confesses Music's sway,
And transmits its ancient glory
To our own admiring day.

But the ages yet progressing
Find a deeper meaning here ;
And another power confessing,
Bid transforming Love appear.

With a harmony unending,
Love entrances human strife,
While discordant nations, blending,
Find the unison of life.

From the dark and savage regions,
From each fierce and hostile shore,
Gather earth's fraternal legions,
Panting for revenge no more.

To the temple of their Union
Flow the millions, race by race,
Till the Poles with sweet communion
Meet in Love's divine embrace.

Round the earth Love's voices rolling,
Swell their magic melody—
War, and strife, and hate controlling
With a joyous liberty.

Kindred music fills the arches
Of the universe of stars,
Where each shining planet marches
Round its orbit without jars.

Not a comet, onward dashing,
Dare disturb a starlet's dream;
But its most erratic flashing
Mingles with light's golden stream.

Let the beaming Constellations,
From the ages that have flown,
Teach the fiercely warring nations—
Life exists in Love alone.

This shall crown our planet's glory,
As the noontide crowns the day;
And the earth, once dark and gory,
Roll resplendent on her way.

Hope perceives a shining vision,
Streaming down the track of years;
Sees restored to joys Elysian
Earth, among the happy spheres.

In her dreams she sees each nation
Breaking every bloody sword;
Sees, within a new creation,
Love and Truth and God adored.

THE SHEPHERDS' SIGN.

Luke ii : 12.

"But how shall we discern the Wondrous Babe ;
This Infant—royal and divine ?
By what fixed token's certain sign ?
By the star-seer's cunning astrolabe,
That finds the natal planet most benign ?"

"In David's city lodgeth many a stranger
This night, expectant of the morn ;
Well-housed are some, and some forlorn :
But cradled in a cattle-manger,
You there will find the Babe-King Virgin-born."

"High Monarch is He of the earth and skies;
His crowns are many, and His sway
Shall last through an eternal day :
For, see ! the Morning Star arise,
And stream in yonder stall its signal ray."

Persuaded by these voices of the night,
And by God's glory on the sky,
Straightway the astonished shepherds hie,
Enthrilled with wonder and delight,
To see their King, long promised from on high.

And there, wrapped round with swaddling bands,
Who made the worlds by sov'reign might—
The source and substance of all light,
The Lord of Glory for all lands—
Sweet sleeps God's Babe, where cattle lie at night.

The Shepherds greet their sign ; by which they know
The world's desire and Judah's King—
Who cometh down to earth, to bring
From Heaven true life for us below—
He, manger-cradled, sleeps while Angels sing.

For you and me, oh, brother man, what sign,
To guide us to the Holy Place,
To show us God's incarnate face,
And help us find the Life divine—
The Grace and Glory born into our race ?

Look not for Him within life's crowded inn;
A selfish world denies Him room,
It builds Him but a Cross and Tomb,
It shuts Him out and lodges Sin—
Rejects the Light and gluts itself in gloom.

But seek Him where the contrite spirit dwells:
Where men with godly sorrow mourn,
Where suffering souls, with woes out-worn,
Hide beast-like in life's wretched cells—
Where hope, by black despair is overborne.

Within the world's deep darkness we shall find
A Light that falls not from the sun,
A Life—before the worlds begun,
To raise the dead, illume the blind—
A Love that makes mankind and God at one.

PLATO'S PRAYER.*

All mortals pray; and everywhere,
The calm and listening air
Forever hears some human prayer.
On sea and land, in fields and streets,
Its endless prayers the weary world repeats.

"Oh! make all things below the skies,
Before my longing eyes,
Like trees of gold resplendent rise;
That I may pluck their fruit to-day,
And go with gilded splendor on my way."

"Oh! seat me on the throne of power—
The world's most princely dower—
That I may rule, though one brief hour,
And, clad in kingly purple, see
Submissive millions bend the servile knee."

"Oh! give me some enchanted name,
Such as a god might claim—
The darling of immortal fame;
And place an angel on each star,
With trumpet voice to herald me afar."

Such prayers of men we ever hear,
Renewed from year to year—
The voices of this human sphere ;
And still the groveling theme proclaims
The world's mistaken, low and empty aims.

Now, hear a voice from ages old,
Down listening eras rolled,
That asks not fame, nor power, nor gold ;
But o'er the world's metallic din
It comes, "Oh ! make me beautiful within."

The equipage of vast estates,
Which the empty mind o'er-rates—
The garnished walls and golden gates,
Are but the marsh's fatuous fires
Beneath the stars of Virtue's high desires.

And Youth, adorned with many a gem,
And flashing diadem,
Expects to charm the world by them ;
And barters, for her gauds and face,
A jeweled soul with its immortal grace.

And nations in their struggles pray
For wider realms of sway,
And marshal on their bloody way
Marauding armies, to obtain
The tempting tinsel of the vanquished train.

But shall the nations never turn
To loftier themes, and burn
With nobler impulse, than to earn
Exterior glitter, and the show
Of gross material—downward in its flow ?

A good it is to grade the hill,
Or bind the wandering rill
To labor's wheel ; but nobler still,
With truth and virtue to control
Discordant states, and beautify the soul.

Let men and nations everywhere
Still burden heaven's sweet air
With this sublime angelic prayer,
Against the selfishness of sin—
"Oh ! make us mortals *beautiful within.*"

* That I might become *beautiful* in the *inner man.—Plato.*

THE SONG OF CHRIST.

I saw, amid the wandering spheres,
A planet near the sun ;
I heard across its radiant disc
Swift-footed ages run.

Ten million other star-worlds flashed
Along their glimmering flight ;
But voiceless as the grave they went,
Yet eloquent with light.

And heard I, while the infant years
Came tottering o'er this one,
Redoubling thunders, clashing wild,
Far echoing round the sun.

Confusion, with her thousand tongues,
Tumultuous babbled there ;
While War his steely armor struck,
And dinned the rattling air.

It seemed a wilderness of sighs,
A wailing waste of moans ;
While poured the planet down the skies
A cataract of groans.

But voiceless still, the other worlds
Marched on with gleaming helms ;
And mute each bannered system moved
Along the starry realms.

I looked—and some had come, and gone
Forever—evermore,
And some with shining infant feet
Just touched creation's shore.

Some glimmered, like exhausted lamps,
Then flickered, smoked and died ;
And planet corses floated down
Upon the stellar tide.

But at the death of hoary stars,
Or at the infant's birth,
The mystic hosts ne'er moved a tongue,
Except the moaning earth.

The ages dropped, like autumn leaves,
  Along the planet's way ;
But still the thundering tumult shook
  The walls of night and day.

But strangely sweet at length arose
  Above the sea of moans
A song of jubilee, that caught
  From Heaven celestial tones.

Confusion's thousand tongues were dumb,
  And war's wild tumult hushed,
When from the planet's joyous throat
  The conquering pean gushed.

From star to star along the skies,
  The tongues of light awoke,
And o'er the quiring universe
  The Hymn of Jesus broke.

The raptured planet led the choirs
  About the chanting sun ;
While every star-lip quivering sung
  The Song of Christ begun.

ALL HAIL!

Amid the sun-leaves of the blossoming dawn
  The Marys early, love-waked, hasten toward the tomb
  Where, all that night of loneliness and gloom,
Their hearts had been and every thought had gone.

Like timid specters glide they through the street,
  Subjecting woman's fear to woman's love ;
  While morning smites the air and clouds above
With dimness, it is dark about their feet.

And dark it is within each stricken heart,
  Where yet no Sun of Hope hath dared to rise ;
  No gray of Faith hath paled the midnight skies—
Such darkness as when moon and stars depart.

Their spices shall embalm the Holy One ;
If Death must have him it shall take him so,
With all the love and homage they can show,
Before the day emerges with the Sun.

But see ! What glory through the twilight air
Forth flashes from that Heaven-sent Messenger,
Whose awful splendor gilds the sepulcher,
And smites, like death, the keepers watching there.

"Fear not, ye friends of him ! He is not here.
Behold the place where that dear body lay ;
Dismiss in hope and joy your heart's dismay ;
Go tell the others that he shall appear !"

Back from the grave bewildered with delight
They hasten, while the clouds are shot with gold,
And morning tints of beauty manifold
Lace all the garments of the dying night.

The sunrise in their hearts sends answering beams
To greet the outward glory of the morn ;
Till all the world, an hour ago forlorn,
Transfigured, in auroral splendor gleams.

"All hail !" A voice from out the twofold dawn
Salutes their ears ; and suddenly there stands
Their buried Lord. They clasp his feet and hands.
"It is !" "He lives !" They hold him. No. He's gone.

THE ARCTIC SPRIGHT.

A crash ; a startling thunderstroke,
As if the earth's huge axle broke ;
An echo from the hills of snow—
A plunge into the deep below—
And now a wavering iceberg sailing slow.

Thus launched, it quits its icy pole ;
About its sides the billows roll ;
While o'er its smooth and rounded walls
A bright Aurora's image falls ;
And there, imprisoned, stands a spright and calls.

He shouts—he shrieks—he raves—in vain!
His snow-bride's eye shall ne'er again
Illume his life; though long and late
She lingers at her crystal gate,
And prays the setting stars to watch and wait.

He gazes at the snowy shore,
That fades with her whom he no more
Shall see; for fiends have chained him here
Within this floating prison, drear,
That bears him southward to another sphere.

Afar the icy mountain floats;
The nearer sun upon it gloats;
The fields of snow have turned to green,
And all beneath the sun is seen
An arch of blue, with glittering waves between.

Before the crystal window stands
The wailing spright, and wrings his hands;
While overhead the sun grows red,
And hotter beams descending spread
A gorgeous roof of rainbows o'er his head.

Thus, southward far he sails, and sails
Through warmer waves and softer gales;
And sees his dwindling prison, day
By day, about him melt away
In summer kisses and the shining spray.

At last, upon the icy hull
He stands, and flutters like a gull
Beside the track of passing ships;
Until the sea, with fevered lips,
The last of all this frozen mountain sips.

Now down through strangling waves he sinks;
But upward from the coral brinks
Reach snowy arms, whose soft embrace
Transport him to a fairy place,
Where peers upon him many a witching face.

And there, in gardens cool and dim,
The mermaids kiss and fondle him;
They lead him where the sea-nymphs hide,
And beauty woos on every side,
Till Tropic Love is more than Arctic Bride.

LIGHTNING.

How it flashes! how it glares!
On the cloud so vast and black!
How it leaps along the steeps
Of cloudy crags! How it tears
Through the darkness on its track,
Darting to some distant mountain crag—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

How it shakes its fiery tresses
In the Thunder's angry face!
How it gleams in dim recesses!
How it measures stormy space!
How it hurls its blazing lances
Red-hot hissing in the seas!
How the swift-shot weapon glances
Down the splintered forest-trees!
How it shakes the castle-walls, tearing down the flag—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

See it dart on silver points,
Running down the iron rod,
Slipping through the quivering joints,
Diving deep into the sod!
How it springs upon the mast,
Clutching like a beast of prey;
While the sailor stands aghast,
Hurls the splinters o'er the spray.
Rends the canvas as a giant tears a rag—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

How it startles in the night!
Pouring flames upon the dwellings,
Rousing sleepers with affright,
Bringing death without foretelling;
With the thunder pealing after,
Like a thousand demons yelling,
Shaking pillar, wall, and rafter—
Burning now beyond all quelling—
While the fire, with crackling laughter,
Leaves the walls with many a black and smoking jagg—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

How it frightens timid souls,
In its mad, fantastic play,
While the thunder-tumult rolls
On its dark and stormy way;
Leaping down upon the steeple,
Darting straight along the clouds,
Hurling terror on the people,
Wrapping many in their shrouds!
How it gilds the cloudy ridges,
Springing out upon the dark!
How it flings its airy bridges,
Spanning clouds with fiery arc;
O'er the Orinoco's Llanos,
Through the telegraphic wire,
Plunging into hot volcanoes
To the secret heart of fire,
Mingling with the lava, hissing in the slag—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

How it streams along the plain!
How it revels in the air!
How it dances in the rain!
Shaking out its blazing hair;
Leads the surly, growling Thunder,
Filling summer with his rage;
Rends the royal oak asunder,
Melts the book-clasp of the sage;
Rides the stormy cloud afar,
Playing round its breezy car,
Till it sinks behind the distant mountain crag—
Whizzing zig—flashing zag!

RURAL CHARMS.

Lift up your heads, ye stooping throngs,
And see Life's constellations;
For the stars are resonant with songs
Above the plodding nations.

Forget, one hour, each slavish care,
And walk among the mountains;
Inhale the pure and fragrant air,
And drink from gushing fountains

Ye warriors, fling aside your arms,
And hush your battle-thunders ;
For smiling Peace amid her farms,
Invites to rural wonders.

Ye crowds, that go like driven herds
Along your streets and alleys,
Come out to hear the singing birds
And brooklets in the valleys.

Forsake your hot and noisy walls,
And come among the roses ;
We'll sit beside the waterfalls
Until the twilight closes.

We'll wander down the winding streams
To watch the birds and fishes ;
Or sleep in shadows where sweet dreams
Shall crown our dearest wishes.

And when the evening shadows trail
Along the grassy ridges,
We'll down the placid rivers sail
Beneath their arching bridges.

The moon shall look with radiant face
Through air with odors laden,
And see us in some happy place
With love and lute and maiden.

Oh ! then forsake the dusty street,
While summer charms invite you;
Let shady forests cool the heat,
And mountain farms delight you.

GOOD-NIGHT !

Good-night ? thou day so nearly spent,
Whose banner, towards the west,
Retires along the evening hills,
While voices of a thousand rills
Invite the world to rest,
Where night has pitched her starry tent.

Good-night ! ye cares, that vexed my mind
  Throughout the troubled day ;
Your voices I no longer hear—
Your coming steps no more I fear ;
  Like dreams now haste away,
Nor leave a memory behind.

Good-night ! ye sorrows, keen and deep,
  My bleeding heart forsake ;
With all your tortures now begone !
And leave me till the morrow dawn ;
  Nor come in dreams, to wake
My soul from out its balmy sleep.

Good-night ! ye burning thoughts of fame
  That struggle towards the stars ;
Amid the silent midnight hours,
Come not, though wreathed with brightest Flowers,
  Though borne on radiant cars
That mount the skies with wheels of flame.

Good-night ! all human hate and scorn—
  I pass beyond your sway ;
For now, amid the shades of night
That hide the busy world from sight,
  I take my quiet way
Through blissful regions towards the morn.

Good-night ! to every worldly fate ;
  Now shut is evening's door :
Uplift your wings, ye angel dreams,
And waft me to those starry streams
  That flash on Beauty's shore,
Beyond the mystic Golden Gate.

THE RIVAL KNIGHTS.

An Allegory for the Times.

In a castle on the mountains
  Dwells a lady, queenly fair;
Soft her voice as silver fountains,
  Golden sunlight is her hair.

In her cheek the rose is blooming,
On her lips is honey-dew,
And her eyes are still assuming
Some enchantment ever new.

On the mountain stands her castle,
Like a golden jeweled crown,
Where each summit seems a vassal
To the Empress kneeling down.

Westward rolls a flashing ocean,
Where the sunset fades from sight;
Eastward billows in commotion
Wreath their brows with morning light.

On the walls a banner waving,
Shows the stripes and flaunts the stars,
In whose shadow Peace sits craving
Gentler tokens from Red Mars.

Where the beaming lamp of Hesper
Ever gilds the castle walls;
And, like chiming bells at vesper,
Mountain-music fills the halls.

Thither rival knights are wending,
For the lady's hand is free,
And she waits their fierce contending—
Waits the arm of victory.

On the mountain swords are clashing;
One, a dark and cruel knight,
Whose antagonist is flashing
In a panoply of light.

From the bright and balmy regions
Has the Black Knight bent his way;
But his foe leads valiant legions
Where the northern rivers stray.

Sits the lady now in sorrow;
For she loves the Radiant Knight,
And is hoping that to-morrow
He will come in armor bright.

Shall the lady pine in prison?
Vanquish then the Sable Knight;
Ere another sun be risen
Let his eye forsake the light.

For he rules with lash and fetter;
And he woos the lady fair,
That his avarice may get her
For his Dungeon of Despair.

Should he win, he will not love her,
For he glories in his slaves;
Better in the blast above her
Wail the mournful grass of graves.

Rather Death, whose hatred blesses,
Should our lady's form embrace,
Than with slavery's caresses
Droop in woe each living grace.

Each the conflict fiercely wages
For the lady and his life,
While the wistful future ages
Linger, trembling, o'er the strife.

Bleeding millions look and wonder
What shall issue from this fight;
And the nations, rent asunder,
Pray for Liberty's brave Knight.

Lo! the clustered Stars are shaking
Through the darkness of the hour;
And Columbia is quaking,
Like a thunder-stricken tower.

Shall one Pleiad e'er be wanting
In these constellated States?
Shall the despot e'er be vaunting
O'er the Freedom which he hates?

Shall this harmony, so golden—
Once as musical as stars—
Like historic unions olden,
End in anarchy and jars?

Looks the lady from her castle,
Pale with sorrow and with fears;
Shall she be a tyrant's vassal,
Pining hopeless through the years?

For our fair Republic's glory;
For the lady of our song;
Lie the Black Knight crushed and gory,
Rendered impotent of wrong.

Then unshaken shall this Union
Firm as earth forever stand;
And these States, in sweet communion,
Still be Freedom's golden land.

LET THERE BE LIGHT.

"Let there be light!" Outspoke the mighty voice,
Above wild chaos and its jargon noise,
And, beautiful to see,
The gloom began to flee
Before the conquering beams of new born light,
That flashed the golden Day against the Night.

"Let there be light!" Once more the voice was heard,
Above chaotic life, and faith, and word,
And in the form of MAN
The LIGHT of LIFE began
To flash upon the night, in human eyes,
The beams that Truth shot downward from the skies.

"Let there be light!" The voice of central suns
Still speaks through time, for earth's benighted ones;
The fiat for the mind
Of tribes and races, blind
To knowledge, manhood, and the priceless rights,
That greet Humanity from heavenly heights.

"Let there be light!" Far flash the beams abroad,
On all the low-born children of our God;
Till night-browed ignorance
Before the golden lance
Of knowledge falls, and leaves the human soul
To rise above the dark world's bad control.

MOMENTS.

We have heard immortal lyres
  Sing sublimely of the ages;
And have seen their rythmic fires
  Glimmer star-like on the pages.

Long have echoed songs of Time,
  Filling years with golden numbers;
But the harp, to build a rhyme
  For the Moment, idly slumbers.

Not by ages do we live;
  These are but a world's bestowment—
God to us will only give
  Life and pleasure by the Moment.

Nor have we an age's woe,
  Else were man o'erwhelmed with sorrow;
But our heart-aches quickly go,
  And we laugh again to-morrow.

Yet a moment may seem years,
  When some agony has crushed us;
And we live an age of fears,
  While death's passing shape has hushed us.

But, when Love has tranced the soul,
  Into moments years are crowded;
And a hundred summers roll
  Under shining skies unclouded.

Then the bounding pulse of bliss
  Neither day nor season measures;
For the heart heeds only this,—
  That it now is mad with pleasures.

But, when Death looks through the cloud,
  And with bony finger beckons;
When between man and his shroud
  Linger but the fleeting seconds:—

Then the Moment grows sublime;
  And the Past, through all its distance,
Seems a lightning flash of time,
  Fading with its fleet existence.

Drowned be Sorrow, then, in Love,
That shall flow on like a river,—
Till eternity above
Shall the soul from Time deliver.

Leave the Ages, then, to earth;
These are not a man's bestowments;
From the rosy dawn of birth,
Life is made of flitting Moments.

HENRY BOYNTON SMITH, S.T.D., LL.D.

[Buried in Northampton, Mass.]

1877.

In Memoriam.

Illustrious dust! of him whose greatness stands,
Not in the pomp of heraldry and pride
Of worldly power, nor by the lifted hands
Of dupes, whom venal demagogues misguide
To vote them loud applause—how poor this earth
Without such wealth! How frail is all the frame
Of human grandeur sundered from such worth!
What empty, tinkling noise all blasts of Fame,
Blown broadly o'er the echoing hills of time,
Without the qualities that make thy name
So dear to good men here, and so sublime
In Heaven! I bring this fragile wreath of rhyme,
And bow with loving reverence at the tomb
Of one for whom earth's buried lords make room.

Northampton! thine the honor of his grave,
Thou peaceful hamlet—fore-ordained for rest.
Not thine tall columns builded for the brave
On bloody fields, nor gilded monuments
Erect by pride, and by the gold unblest
Of riches wrung, and kept, from toil opprest:
But thine the lordliest piles, discerned by sense
Of moral greatness and the light of thought,
Whose summits have God's rays of glory caught—
O'ertopping all the Cæsars ever sought.
Here sleeps heroic Brainerd, by the side
Of her whom death forbade to be his bride;
Their ashes, in the wedlock of the dead,
Repose together in this hallowed bed.

And now, too early for the hearts of them
Who knew thee—much too soon for human weal—
Great teacher! mighty man of loftiest lore,
We mourn our loss, and hail thy diadem
In Heaven. Beside thy tomb I humbly kneel,
To learn anew the love I knew before,
That many a year has held my heart in thrall
To thee: not for thy learning, large and free,
Alone—a knowledge that might well appall
The common brain—but for a heart as sweet
As woman's and a child-like piety
Of faith, I greet thy dust's serene retreat!
Sleep on! where, green with never-ending Spring,
These chanting Pines their balmy censers swing.

THY WILL BE DONE.

"Thy will be done,"
Whose radiant Presence fills the golden urns
Of light, where'er a sun in ether burns;
Oh! thou Eternal One.

The angel wills, through all seraphic hosts
That throng where'er that heaven may be—
That heaven of Hope, of Christ, of Thee—
Submissive, find in Thine their happiness;
Through all the multitudes upon those coasts,
Where Faith has led our feet and giv'n them wings,
Along the shining roads of Bliss,
No angel voice is heard but sings,
"Thy will be done."

And may the earth's dull ear
Be opened by the Spirit's touch, to hear
This hymn of angels, and its chorus learn,
Till all these human wills rebellious, turn
And join the universal anthem high,
Whose music wakes seraphic ecstacy.

And through the tripple kingdom of my soul—
Its intellect, affections, and its will—
O'erwhelming may these heavenly echoes roll,
Till all besides is hushed and still.

Let all the hosts of rebel thought
Be from their armed resistance brought,
To kneel, and sing
Submission to their God and King.

Our little wills, resisting, fight
Against the will Omnipotent,
And struggle, till their baffled might
Is wasted and their fury spent.

But come amid the darkness, then,
And on the wreck of wishes and desires,
Above the ruins of our plans, again
Erect thy temple—lift its golden spires
To heaven, and bid us see
Above our smouldering hopes, above the fires
That burnt our battlements and towers
Rebellious, rising gloriously
Thy structure, built upon the dust of ours.

"Thy will be done,"
While all the myriad wills of earth are blent
And lost in Thine Omnipotent,
Oh! thou Eternal One.

WINTER NIGHT IN THE CITY.

Oh! the night is wild and dreary,
And the screaming winds sweep by;
Ah! the winter pinches sore
Crowds of poor about the door,
Lingering friendless, sad and weary,—
Listen to their piteous cry.

Gloom and tempest shroud the city;
Every star forsakes the night,
While the sullen tramp of feet
Echoes through the crowded street,—
Where Misfortune's angel, Pity,
Turns o'er-burdened from the sight.

Troops of slaves to human passions
Virtue's spotless garments brush ;
Homeward Labor with his loads,
Streetward Guilt with scorpion goads ;—
Tatters, satin, filth and fashions,
Down this human river rush.

Dim in lamp-light, faint and sickly,
Lies this maze of ill and good,
Like a drunken sleeper's brain
Thronged by Fancy's phantom train ;—
Where successive spectres quickly
Mingle with the multitude.

Down in damp and dingy cellars,
Like the beasts within their dens ;
Up in attics, drear and cold,
And in chambers bright with gold—
Gather nightly all those dwellers
From the haunts of busy men.

And the city utters voices,
Rising over roof and wall ;
Shrieks of terror, cries and moans,
Blend with Pleasure's silver tones ;
One bewails and one rejoices,
While the tumult bosoms all.

Doubtless, now the angels linger
O'er this arch of darkness drear ;
And the stars, beyond our sight,
Shine upon those spirits bright,
Who suppress, with meaning finger,
Words of wonder at us here.

Doubtless in the gloom that covers
All this strange and motley scene,
Demons for their victims wait ;
By each Tempter's gilded gate,
Many a wily spirit hovers
Guilt and Innocence between.

But the memory ever gliding,
Backward o'er the fields of time,
Finds old cities overthrown,
Ruins thick on ruins strown ;
Dust and ivy, there abiding,
Mantle wrecks in every clime.

Yet the muse shall leave them nameless;
God has smitten down their pride—
For when men shall dare to build
Walls that worshiped gold doth gild,
And in crime continue shameless—
Time will crush them at a stride.

THE PASSING CLOUD.

That shadowy cloud which on the sky
Of summer seems to sleep,
Like some fair dream in beauty's brain;
So soon to melt before the eye,
And mingle with the deep
Of air, like foam upon the main—
Is not an empty phantom, brief and vain.

For Genius, pensive on the hills
Of earth, observed the bright
But transient vision, ere it went;
And caught its beauty, which now fills
His soul with rare delight,
Enchained in hues divinely blent—
A joy forever, fadeless and unspent.

All nature, radiant, thus appears
Before the eyes of men,
With graceful forms and beauteous mein—
In dewy flowers and shining spheres—
Inviting brush and pen
To catch her glory's changing sheen,
By Art transferred to an ideal scene.

* * * * *

The cloud is gone—the sky is blue,
And not a shade remains:
But whither gone that airy sprite,
That creature of the morning dew,
That ghost of dying rains?
Though far beyond our feeble sight,
Its form o'er earth still floats in heavenly light.

So passes through our life some soul
Of most ethereal mold ;
Though born on earth, it seeks the skies,
Where stars of light untarnished roll,
And suns are thrones of gold ;
For God within it bids it rise
Till, lost in heaven, it leaves our longing eyes.

Let not the grosser world complain
That such ne'er till the soil ;—
Enough there are who plough and mine,
Who thresh the earth for golden grain,
Enough for moiling toil ;
But such we need to come, and shine
On all our carnal cares with light divine.

Go, airy cloud, through summer light,
And seek a purer clime ;
Thy passing shall not be in vain,
Though far in yonder azure height
Ethereal and sublime :—
Go, follow in the sun's bright train,
And flame irradiate o'er the evening main.

Go, heavenly soul, and seek a sphere,
Beyond the clouds of earth,
Of sinless life and pure delight ;
Go, tell thy God that mortals here,
Though darkened in their birth,
Have caught a glimpse of upper light,
And dream of dawns beyond this dreary night.

THE RULING PASSION.

He wandered on with moveless eye direct
Upon the distance fixed ; his sandals, worn
And dusty by long travel, slowly fell
Upon the stony path, and every limb
Seemed bloodless, lifeless, moving by the force
Of some internal fainting energy.
As night descended on the wanderer's way,
The darker night of gloomy forest's wild
Received his course. The leafy wilderness,
And murky air, together, wove a veil
Impenetrable to those glaring eyes :

And as the rising night-wind through the wood
Came swiftly, with a desolate, wild moan,
And shook his withered frame, he stumbled thrice
Upon the rugged path, and sunk at last
In dizzy faintness on a wayside knoll
And slept.

That man of single passion slept—
And dreamed. He saw the midnight moon brightly
The mound, whereon he fell, with silver sheen
O'erlaying, and within its light, a fount
Sent gurgling down into the forest green
A tiny stream. Long gazed the dreamer's eye
Upon the fountain, which an argent mist
O'erhung, until he dreamed he fell asleep.

A dream within a dream the sleeper's soul
Entranced, and suddenly before him rose,
Amid the fountain mist, a shape of light.
A form it was, which clear conception might
Evolve from softly tempered mold of fire—
So soft—it seems no more than light intense.
It rose a human form of maiden grace,
And airy symmetry—complete in light.
Its robe was woven of the evening sun,
And hung in brightness round the shining form
Within, as burns a human soul enrobed
In Heaven's immortal radiance. It stood
A moment on a bubble of the fount,
Slow floating to the stream, then with that hand
Of sculptured light upon the dreamer's arm,
Beckoned to follow. Raised as if by some
Resistless agency, he stood erect;
And down the forest chequered shade they went
Along the stream. The moonlit glades retreat,
Behind them far retiring, as they glide
With quickened speed beneath the shadowy forms
Of tree, and rock, and lonely cloud above;
The while, widens the tinkling rill, and runs
Its deepened tide more steadily. The fawns
And spirits of the sombre wood, entreat
In love, the rushing stream to end its flight
Of headlong haste, and sleep within the pools,
Which fairy hands have in the mossy turf
Scooped out, and strewn with autumn-colored leaves.
But swiftly on it rolls, nor heeds the voice

Of form, or fairy, sylvan spirit, or
The spell-like call of numberless delights
Beskirting its wild way. The flowers, that erst
Their modest forms, mirrored upon the stream,
Beheld so placidly, shrink back aghast;
While hills grow rugged, valleys deep—
And with increased impetuosity
The turbid torrent dashes o'er its banks;
Submerging flower and rock, and grassy slope,
Around the swaying trees roaring wildly.

The moon goes down. Night shuts the western gates,
And o'er the earth her robe of darkness spreads.
That burning form glides onward through the gloom,
Portrayed with fearful brightness on the dark
And dismal air. The wretched dreamer, borne
On unseen wings, cries madly for relief;
But only hears above the waters' roar—
"Man of the ruling passion, lo! thyself."

The stream becomes a foaming, rushing flood,
And rocks, and trees, and dizzy currents, whirl
With deaf'ning thunder and tempestuous sweep
Along the more than midnight-darkened waste;
While on that hand of mellowed fire—a weird
And fearful thing—leads, like a destiny,
Its hapless follower.

But ne'er a ray
Of earliest morn darts through the murky wild,
Like Hope's first gleam upon the rayless mind
Of grim Despair. The cloudless risen sun
Pours down upon the night-enveloped stream
A golden flood, enhaloing that shape,
And frightening fleeing darkness with its glow.
The dense luxuriance of the forest fades
Into a pale and stinted sickliness,
Like children of the giants dying dwarfs.
The sylvan monarchs stoop to shrubbery
Of mean and shriveled growth; no shadow cool
Upon the gasping vegetation falls—
No dew upon the lips of fainting flowers.

The dreary river onward rumbling flies,
Its odor-breathing banks left far behind;
The music of its infant murmur, when
It tinkled softly in its pebbly bed,

And sweet impendent willows whispered low
And tender melody into its ear,
Has hushed before this maddened billow roar.

All that could charm, or soothe, or win, from doom
Most melancholy, has been spurned too long;
And naught is left, but down the blighted steep
To whirl and dash to utter nothingness.

The sun mounts up to noon, and o'er the waste of sand,
Where not a living thing appears, the hot
And crisping air quivers in mimic waves;
And, like the cry of an approaching Doom,
That voice of fearful accent fills the ear—
"Man of the ruling passion, lo! thyself."

The seething waters on their burning track
Roll hissing, crackling, through the blazing sand;
While to the brazen sky a vapory mist
Ascending marks their course.

What panting dread!
Like one who feels the icy billows close
Between him and the sweet warm breath of life,
And sees his grave beneath him rising up
To meet his coming in the deep. Now sunk
The dreamer's soul within him, as he flew
On viewless pinions o'er the blinding waste!
The black and timid river dashing on,
Like some huge monster, serpent-shaped, writhing
With dizzy swiftness o'er a sea of fire.

How drooped his last faint hope, athwart the way
A dark abyss, immeasurable, yawned—
As when the earthquake-riven globe gapes wide
Beneath a hundred-gated city's walls—
A sunless, drear, and bottomless profound.

Above it airily the dazzling guide
Impends, and motionless its fiery hand
Points down the void and fathomless abyss;
While shudd'ring in the pangs of horrid fear,
And dizzy awe, the dangling victim pants
In dire expectancy. High o'er the steep
And giddy precipice, with stunning roar,
The leaping billows vault into the gulf—

But seem an instant hanging in mid-air.
And now the sound of rushing winds, howling
Across the echoing chasm, fill earth and sky
With roar tumultuous, and discord wild,
As on their heated wings—so flaming hot
Simoons seem but a balmy zephyr there—
They catch the pendant flood, and scatter it
In reeking vapor on the burning air.

Nor ever falls a drop below ; but, as
New volumes sweep aloft, the busy winds
Disperse them wasted in an atmosphere,
Which e'en might crisp the bony cheek of death.

The frighted wretch droops o'er the dismal scene—
While like a heaven-ascending angel soars
That beauteous form of light, fading on high ;
And up the fiery sky that voice still rings,
With tones unearthly, that dissolve the dream—
"Man of the ruling passion, lo ! thyself."

THE VANITY OF FAME.

How the human soul is longing
For some world-astounding deed !
While a thousand phantoms thronging
To Ambition's standard speed.

Forward through the glimmering regions
Of Heroic life we gaze ;
Where we see exulting legions,
Crowning us with fadeless bays.

Upward in the azure arching,
Seem our plumes to brush the skies ;
Where the hosts of planets, marching,
On us fix admiring eyes.

Then we sit, and muse, and wonder—
Why the world does not awake :
Musing, why our Jove-voiced thunder
Does not all creation shake :—

Why the whirlwinds have not started
With our names about the globe;
Why around us has not parted
Fameless life's obscuring robe.

Full of discontent, and weary,
We our Fortune ever blame—
That our stagnant life is dreary,
And we're dying far from Fame.

Though no comet's orbit guide us,
And we set not heaven on fire;
Still our conscience need not chide us,
If we ne'er of Duty tire.

Think not deeds of endless wonder
Must the noblest life adorn;
Not of rattling peals of thunder
Is the sweetest music born.

Strive not for majestic actions,
Nor Colossus-like to stride;
Fill your life with benefactions,
And your heart with noble pride.

Through our noiseless, humble duties
Life shall reach its brightest goal;
With our Home-life's modest beauties
Shall we best adorn the soul.

THE WORLD'S KOH-I-NOOR.

A mountain with its cut and polished sides
All flashing with excessive light,
And pouring on the dazzled sight
Bewildering splendor from its hundred faces!
Such is the Koh-i-noor in name,
And this the Koh-i-noor of fame,
That, on its sun-beam wings, o'er shores and tides
From orient skies to western came
In spite of envious Kings and covetous races,
And now in Europe's grandest isles abides.

A mount of light! be this of Him proclaimed
Whose advent though of lowly birth,
Was glory-flooding to the earth:
An Alp, effulgent with celestial splendor,
Down flashing on the misty eyes
Of man, and blazing through the skies,
As though upon the night a new sun flamed
And seized it with a bright surprise,
But man begloomed did not, night-like surrender
To Christ, "the Light," in Holy Scripture named.

A mount of light is Jesus for mankind,
On orient gloom out-flashing far
And heralded by Bethlehem's Star,
That marshaled from Chaldea to the manger,
The Wise Men, learned in science old,
With incense, myrrh, and gifts of gold,
A Babe of Virgin Mother there to find—
Though born a King, as seers foretold;
The Light of Life, to human sight a stranger;
The Sun of Right, for conscience seared and blind.

A mount of light upraised to Eastern skies,
With glory streaming from its sides
And summit in exhaustless tides,
Is Christ, the Holy One—in Heaven annointed,
Who lights the dreary continent
And pours abroad his beams intense
On nations, groping in the gloom of lies,
Or buried in the grave of sense;
The only Light for East or West appointed
To lift the moral night from human eyes.

THROUGH THE DAWN.

Shadows of the earthly, deep and wide;
Darkening all about,
With their veiling clouds of dimness hide
All the wonders of the other side,
Shutting glory out.

Is it distant, then, that other shore?
Must one travel far?

Thought and hope speed ever on before,
Groping eager for some secret door
Opening to a star.

Eyes are closing, that were filled with light,
Flashing from our days;
Are they filling with the gloom of night?
No; but kindling from horizons bright
With Celestial rays.

Think not that the passing spirit flies
Nightward as it goes;
For, as the evening sun down flaming skies
Rises ever upon other eyes,
So its setting glows.

This is dying for the good man's soul—
Passing through the dawn
Upward into days, as planets roll,
Smite your bells with chimes, but do not toll
For this spirit gone.

DAWN.

The night grows grey;
And one by one I see the stars retire
Behind the Jasper walls of slow descending Day.

The lamp expires,
That all night long near patient Suffering burned,
While weary watchers fed its waning fires.

The Earth, aflow
With sea-born vapors, kindling in the dawn
Grows brighter from these streaming mists aglow.

Thus Heaven descends
Below the stars on all our earthly scenes,
And to these mists of Time its glory lends.

The lamps of Fear,
That burned through Sorrow's tedious night go out,
While Hope ascends its shining hemisphere.

Written for the Celebration of the Quarter-Century Anniversary of Plymouth Church, Milwaukee, 1866.

(Tune—HOMEWARD BOUND.)

Praise ye the Father most holy and wise,
Praise Christ our Head;
Praise Him who came from His realm in the skies,
Our living Head:
Vailing his glory and leaving his throne,
Came the Redeemer with blessings unknown,
Calling the sinful to make them his own,
Praise Christ, our Head.

Lift up your voices and praise Him to-day,
Praise Christ your Head!
Lo! how the years have passed swiftly away,
Since Christ, our Head,
Founded the church, gathered here in his name,
Melted in one by the Spirit's warm flame,
Loving the Lord and his truth to proclaim,
With Christ their Head.

Here the Good Shepherd, still watching his fold,
Is Christ our Head;
Here have dear names been by hundreds enrolled,
With Christ as Head—
Names that shall shine in fond memory's light,
Names in the Book of the Lamb ever bright,
Kept there secure in the all-guarding sight
Of Christ, their Head.

Many have gone to the bright land of bliss,
To Christ, their Head,
Faces and forms we shall here ever miss—
Oh, Christ, our Head!
Mingling their voices with heavenly strains,
Walking in white on those beautiful plains,
Where neither evil nor sorrow remains,
With Christ, their Head.

They who still linger on Time's wintry shore
Seek Christ, their Head;
Praying and waiting in hope evermore
For Christ, their Head;—

Bravely contending in Faith's holy fight,
Standing for Jesus, for man, and the right;
Shielded from danger, and kept by the might
Of Christ, the Head.

Household of faith and home circle of love,
With Christ the Head—
Broken on earth, but uniting above
In Christ our Head;
Meeting where oft we have gathered before,
People and Pastors assemble once more,
Greeting each other, while God we adore—
Bless Christ, our Head.

From this Reunion, then, march we right on
Toward Christ, our Head,
Leaving the years that so swiftly have gone
To Christ, our Head;
Soon will our pilgrimage end, and our feet
Rest from their journey on Heaven's golden street;
There may we all, as one family, meet,
With Christ, our Head.

HE AND SHE.

What manner of wight is he that never heard,
Or read in woodland story, that the bird
Which lays the egg is not the bird that sings;
But round the throat that sings shines lustrous rings,
And when he flies flings rainbows from his wings?

A partnership in love and in the nest
There is; and breast responds to throbbing breast,
In every joy and sorrow of their life,
While far from them are blown all storms of strife:
Yet HUSBAND husband is—and WIFE is wife.

The SINGER sings, patient the BROODER broods,
Amid the shadow of the whispering woods;
The one to cheer the hours with blithesome lays,
The other silent—but as rapt in praise—
And both, in hope, await the end of days.

When secret life forth from its hidden springs
Shall start and stir, feeling the sense of wings—
When eggs shall yield their sacred mysteries,
And LIVES, that come to frolic in the breeze,
Begin to feel the cradle-swing of trees.

And now the SINGER and his songless mate,
From the door of dawn to evening's dusky gate,
In loving emulations, here and there,
On restless wing, from glebe and tree and air
Supply the nurture for their wide-mouthed care;

Till pinions, grown and stretching forth for flight,
Adventure awkward from some easy height,
Learning the secret of their air-career;—
When, all the hopes that flushed the springing year
Fulfilled—a flock—they southward disappear.

And there, beneath the gentler autumn skies,
Shall envy, strife, or bitterness arise,
Because the gifts and functions of the twain
Unequal seem? The SINGER gets no gain
To cause the silent BROODER to complain.

The noise and pomp of life, the outward show,
Mislead indeed; but all the wise ones know
That duty done in silence, with no eye
But ONE to see will stand at last as high
As deeds that fling their banners up the sky.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—*Job of Uz.*

O awful Foe! who unseen smites,
With mortal blow on blow,
From out this deep and dismal gloom of nights—
Condensed in terrors round me—
Already hast thou laid me low!

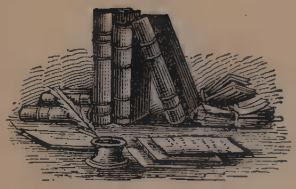
Smite on! there is no hostile hate
Within my heart; no strife
Of mine is this—fierce and inveterate;
Mine Enemy hath found me,
And leapt upon the Citadel of Life.

I yield thee all! What can I more?
Resistance none I make;
This prostrate form, the anguish, wounds and gore—
All things that sore confound me,
Unanswering, and in patience, do I take.

For, O mysterious Foe unseen!
Thy hand the hand of Death
May be to me; and yet my heart doth lean
Upon thee, and around me
An Arm of Life, I feel, sustains my breath.

Yea, smite! Rain blows all hot with pain
Upon this quivering dust;—
Even then, when bruised and broken, bleeding, *slain*,
With woes that waste and wound me,
In thee, O Loving Foe! I still will trust.

Miscellaneous Prose Selections.



MISCELLANEOUS PROSE SELECTIONS.

CHURCH GROWTH.

The Kingdom of Heaven, in its broadest and largest sense, is like a grain of mustard seed, that from a small germ expands to a great magnitude. Growth or development is the law also of the local organization. A few believers associate themselves together for worship, and for co-operation in the work of the gospel At the beginning the number is small, and the elements of power and influence limited. But they lay the foundations in hope, and undertake their career by faith.

The one thing, therefore, which all young churches expect is an increase in all the elements of a large and efficient organization. Just as children look forward to manhood and womanhood, so churches anticipate maturity.

This expectation is proper, and the inspiration from it legitimate. But there is urgent need that every such church have right conceptions of this growth. False notions upon this fundamental idea can only bring disappointment and harm.

Numbers have a fascination to most people that is bewildering and misleading. There are many to whom a crowd means success. And for this reason it is, that in the beginnings of new churches there is such a temptation to seek simply the success of a multitude. To let the pews, to fill the edifice, to create a whirl of the neighborhood toward the new centre; these things too often become the chief objects in view. And as the custom of the age is to make the pulpit responsible for the pecuniary resources of the church, the preacher himself is almost forced into efforts to secure the advantage of numbers. If he can draw well enough to raise the necessary income, there are not a few who accept that result as real success.

There is a sense in which a religious society is to be conducted upon "business principles," as it is often said; but that sense is upright, honest, financial management of the society, prompt payments, fair and square dealings, economy, living within the income, just as a prudent and successful business man would conduct his private enterprise. But it does not mean that a religious society is to be placed upon a purely secular basis, and that the first and main question is to make it pay.

If rightly managed, no doubt it will pay. There may be a limited period of infancy, in which it must be supported by voluntary aid; but it will, in due time, be self-sustaining. But the way to render it self-sustaining is not the superficial way of mere numbers. Quality is of more value than quantity in this case. You better have a little of the refined gold, than an unwieldy mass of ore.

The success of a church depends upon its *interior life*. What is first wanted is genuine piety among the members. A hundred real, earnest, zealous Christians are worth a thousand that have a name to live, but lack godliness. Gideon's three hundred are God's chosen army to achieve victory. All the rest confer a favor by their absence; their presence would only be an incumbrance.

One of the evils and the perils of our time, in church life, is just this mistake of seeking success in numerical force. Numbers will be sure to be acquired, just as soon as any church is prepared in itself to absorb them safely. A church needs spiritual digestive power, to appropriate the nutriment of a crowd. When it has piety enough to warm a large mass of cold raw material, the material is not likely to be wanting.

The stages, then, in this vital law of church growth, are these:

First—Development of *piety*, and so of spiritual power. Let the church make this the supreme aim.

Second—As based upon this and growing naturally out of it, *moral character*. A church that is not marked by a high and pure morality has no title to existence. If religion does not make its professors upright and honest, and virtuous and true, there will be no demand for it.

Third—A growth in *intelligence*. Pious people need not be ignorant nor stupid. There is no such text-book in the world as the Bible. Every church should be a school for the study of the Word of God. An old church that is not intelligent in the Scriptures has not grown.

Lastly comes the stage of *numbers*. This will surely follow the other three.

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

Religion hallows everything it touches, and intensifies all the emotions that come, under its influence. Our natural human relations, such as the domestic and social, are rendered stronger and more sacred in our esteem, when allied to our religious ideas and feelings.

For this reason, the relation existing between a Christian community and their chosen pastor has always been of peculiar sanctity and interest. He is appointed of God to minister to them in things that pertain to their moral and spiritual welfare. His presence naturally suggests the Divine, and transfers the thoughts from things earthly to things heavenly. Other men by their personal associations and duties suggest business, politics, art, pleasure, health, or some other of the various interests of life; but this one man stands alone and peculiar, in that when people look upon him their higher nature, their relations to the divine immediately come into consciousness.

Round about this teacher and leader gather thus all the most sacred associations of human experience. There is only one other man in the community to whom it is given at all to share in these sentiments. This is the family physician, who ministers to the body diseased, and whose skill and fidelity are matters of the highest

moment in the midst of the perils of sickness. But the doctor has to do chiefly with the mortal part of our nature; although, to be sure, the minds of his patients are actual factors in his diagnosis and treatment of disease, and the Christian physician has a thousand opportunities in the midst of bodily suffering and in the solemn presence of death, for doing good to the souls of his patients.

But no one ranks the body as high as the spirit; and thus he who is specially called to minister to the spiritual wants of mankind, occupies a peculiarly sacred position. He is God's teacher, guide, comforter to his people in the midst of the manifold experiences of life. He points the way to heaven, and ought himself to walk therein, that others shall clearly discover the path, going before in all good things, as God shall give him grace as an ordained shepherd of the flock.

The pastor is thus not only hallowed, but also often idealized before the imagination of his people. They see not simply or exactly what he is, but also what they think he ought to be. Their affection and confidence tend to transfigure him to their view; just as honest and ardent love does between husband and wife.

Now, while this may in certain instances be carried too far, it is not to be deprecated as a general rule. For it is God's consecrated way and means of the utmost good. This very confidence so strong, this affection so pure and unselfish, this idealization so transforming—all furnish the channel along which the Divine blessings descend upon the church in largest measure.

The chief dangers to be apprehended from the matter are two:

One is that the pastor shall desire favor for its own sake, or rather for his own selfish sake, and so bring on the evils of a priesthood. The temptation to infirm human nature is great. The history of all religions bears its solemn warnings on every page. And the people owe it to their pastor and to themselves, to see to it that their leader remain always a shepherd and a minister, not a man of priestly or regal claims.

The other danger is, that the people themselves will forget that they are the Church of Christ, to whom are committed the oracles of God; that they are to be the temple of the Holy Ghost; that with them the Divine power is deposited; that upon them really rests the obligation to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" and that though their leader may fall by the way, or in the day of conflict be confined to his tent, they are to fight the battle of the Lord and achieve the victory of salvation. Blessed is that people and thrice blessed that pastor who, forgetting themselves, "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE.

There was a time when to become a Christian made a man conspicuous. To-day a Chinese convert is necessarily a marked person; because he stands for Christ among his Pagan neighbors. But in this land of long-established Christian institutions a convert is only one who enters the ranks of a great army on the

march. He is hardly observed at all. There are tens of thousands just like him. And, on this account, there is a tendency among such disciples to think too little of their obligations to shine.

Now there are multitudes of lamps in the streets of the city ; but in order to disperse the gathering darkness, it is required that every burner be lighted. The one midway on the block must blaze as well as the more prominent one on the corner. In the oriental cities each passenger carried his own lantern ; and to be out after nightfall without a light was taken as evidence of bad designs, and subjected the suspected person to arrest and imprisonment. This illustrates the topic of Christian shining. Every man is expected to carry a lantern ; a lantern of character, of good works, of Christ-like spirit. Trim your lamps every day ; keep them burning ; let them shine, on the streets, along every highway and alley of business, in the parlors and dining-rooms of your neighbors, in the places of recreation and amusement, in railway coach and in the saloon of the steamer. And do not think proper to blow them out as soon as you get home ; but put in fresh oil for the fireside, and shine like an angel in the house

GOOD THOUGHTS FOR BAD TIMES.

There may be a difference of opinion as to what it is that makes a time bad. But generally people reckon those times to be bad when money is scarce, business dull, labor undemanded ; when the ships and freight cars run half empty, or do not run at all ; when profits are small and losses are large.

It would not be difficult, however, to show that such times may be misunderstood and misjudged. That they are inconvenient no one will deny. Neither are thunder storms generally convenient. Frost is not as pleasant to most people as sunbeams ; but the history of mankind shows that, on the whole, it is better to live in a region where ice forms and snow falls every year. The man of the tropics is not the best man of the world.

If you will again call History to the witness-stand, she will testify that the times of greatest financial prosperity are also times of self-indulgence, of luxurious habits, of demoralizing extravagance, of degeneracy of taste and mode of living—of earthliness in its worst forms. There may be giants in those days, but a poor order of giants ; and taking the world together, humanity is vastly more indebted to common men than to any giants, ancient or modern,

Rainy days keep people in doors ; but they make the crops grow. Tempests render navigation difficult and dangerous ; but they restore the equilibrium of the atmosphere. So, what are called hard times generally, cause manhood and womanhood to thrive. The rugged nurse, Economy, that had been dismissed in overflowing times, returns, and brings back with her health and vigor, turning lassitude and laziness into the streets.

Many persons, in this cloudy and rough weather of hard times, take down their

neglected Bibles amid a cloud of dust, and make a wonderful discovery—that man's life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions. Others open a different bank account—now laying up for themselves treasures in Heaven. Some who were growing indolent, and so losing their health and spirits, are obliged to go to work again, and thus have their youth renewed. And ten thousand children, who were ready to be spoiled by the knowledge that they would inherit money enough, and so were under no bonds to exert themselves in any way, except to spend their fortunes, are brought to face the plain fact that bread and butter is to be earned.

Myriads of tad-pole speculators, also, reach the point of arrested development, in hard times; and instead of realizing their bright dream of becoming the biggest toads in the puddle of speculation, they simply remain ordinary, industrious, thrifty and contented porwigles. Many a man, therefore, on his death-bed, or sooner, will be thankful that hard times came on just as they did.

FIRST OF MAY.

May is the month of timid buds, bolder leaves and bravest blossoms. The sunbeams have stopped playing and gone to work; their winter frolic and gayeties among icicles and snow-crystals have ended, and they have serious business enough now on hand. They are getting warmed up with vernal enterprise. What was mere intellectual glitter in January has got a heart, and that heart, by some communication or other, has got fire in it. Perhaps it is the great spring purpose which these sunbeams have in mind now to bring on the glories of vegetation, and to heal winter-sick hearts by the balm of a thousand flowers. And so they are putting their little golden levers under the folding of the buds, and prying them open just enough to let in the painters and perfumers; and as the air grows warm, and occasionally a little sultry, they spread the fans of the leaves and put all the trees in a flutter. And somehow the birds have found out what was going on up North, and have come back with their wings full of motion, their hearts full of delight, and throats full of music, that overflows into all the groves and fields, till one would think he had strayed into a canary fair, where the birds were all singing for the prize. But the fact is, probably, it is only a way these feathered folk have of making love—a little noiser, doubtless, than the human whispering method, but very likely just as sincere and almost as sensible. So, there will be a good many new nests going up presently—the homes of these gay and happy young housekeepers. Does anybody know whether birds ever rent their residences? One thing is evident, they are considerably given to moving. Now and then, indeed, a sedate old pair return every season to the same old tree, and take up the familiar abode; but as they have no furniture there is very little trouble involved. If they had stoves to take down and put up, carpets to pull up and shake and lay down again, pianos to move, pictures to hang, windows to wash, floors to scrub, and more than all if much of this labor had to be performed by proxy, and the proxies proved to be

mighty in promises, and feeble in fulfillments, with memories singularly unreliable in the matter of engagements, do you suppose these denizens of the trees would move every spring? Probably not, if they could help it.

It is evident, therefore, that the first of May is a delightful season to birds, and those people who are fortunate enough to own their houses and do not care to sell. But what are birds and gay leaves, warm sunbeams and music in the air, to the unhappy people who are obliged to move sometime between the midnight of April 30th, and the weary midnight of May 1st? To be sure there are four and twenty hours to select from; but not one of the hours seems to be ambitious of the honor. If one had only a carpet-bag, or possibly just rich enough to own a single trunk, he might take a late breakfast, and then be moved before dinner; provided, always, he was not compelled to hire an express-wagon or drayman. But as most people have never been able to attain to such a state of independence, and have, by the accumulations of personal property, whether of much value or not, become the servants of servants, their freedom of movement is much restricted.

The decree is finally issued, "Move!" April hears the order promulgated. The die is cast; the "house is given up"—that is the Rubicon—to mix illustrations like the mixing of furniture on the occasion in question, the bridge is burned. It is too late to retreat. Now for a series of skirmishes, consisting of attacks on houses "to let," or "to rent." Landlords aspiring, inexorable, indifferent beyond intimidation; thousands of others, like yourself, across the Rubicon and the bridges burned; placards disappearing, one after another, mysteriously, and yet very significantly; and all the time April closing upon you, nearer and nearer, till you can almost hear the hoarse voice of May in the distance: "Every man to his tent." At last you dodge into a door, and find your head under a rented roof of your own.

Now comes the first real good, satisfactory night's rest; with a sleep, into whose dreams glide no houses like disturbed ghosts wearing on their spectral hearts the dreadful words, "For Rent." You begin to think of business, if you are a business man; and of sermons, if you happen to be a minister. But just as you begin to imagine that the "winter of your discontent" is made glorious summer, and all the clouds that lowered upon your home are sunk "in the deep bosom of" your lease, you are disenchanted by the fact that the first of May is only a day's march distant, and your house is not ready. Painters behind time; carpenters still at work; plasterers coming back to patch up the bad job; plumbers very busy, and no time to do anything; gas-fitters waiting for the joiners, and the joiners on a strike for higher wages and less hours. Meanwhile it rains. But the family that have taken your house must have possession, and you must antecedently quit the premises. And such a leave-taking! Of all the farewells and good-bys in the world, this is the least poetical. Probably a forcible ejectment by an officer of the law would equal, and possibly exceed, this in the high degree of confusion and rummage attained; but even such a departure would be attained by proportionate compunctions. If you were dismissed from the premises by violence, you would have no disposition to bid anything or anybody adieu; but now you have some pleasant memories connected with the old rooms, where you enjoyed the society of congenial friends, where your wife and baby used to furnish

exclusive audience in the bright and sacred centre of domestic life, where the flowers bloomed and the birds sang, and where the books were; and yet all the tender feelings of a farewell are over-piled and trampled upon by the hurry-skurry of "moving out." Beds, stoves, sofas, barrels, books, chairs, crockery, cradle, baby's carriage, piano, carpets, trunks, pictures, and the heterogeneous crowd of odds and ends, that everybody finds himself the owner of without the slightest recollection of where they came from, or how they ever got into his possession, go pell-mell down the front steps with indescribable clatter and crash into the street, landing on the sidewalk with broken legs, scratched surfaces and mutilated forms, in a formidable chaos of personal property. If the photographer could only happen along just at that critical moment, and take an instantaneous view, he would come into possession of a fixed expression of an unutterably ludicrous, though sufficiently serious, scene.

Well, you finally reach the new abode. The fires are lighted, and presently your unknown neighbor rushes out of the front door screaming, "Fire! Fire!" Everybody rushes toward everybody else, and asks where the fire is. You go out yourself, and find the crowd looking at your house. The fact is you and your neighbor have one chimney in partnership. You have got a little the advance with your fire, and as your neighbor had failed to get a thimble in his stove-pipe hole, you have unintentionally filled his house with the blackest of smoke. As good naturedly and as speedily as possible you extinguish the fires. Next, you let the water into the pipes, only to find it spurting under your parlor-carpet, and trickling down the walls in half a dozen places. And so, to save the plastering and your goods, you extinguish that part of Lake Michigan which belongs to your rented estate. Then the sky, that had for an hour given evidence of brighter things, suddenly fills with great black clouds; you distinctly catch the ominous echoes of distant thunder, and redouble your hurry. But before you can "move in" the rain comes down on beds, bureaus, books, and everything else, without the least partiality or discrimination on the part of the drops. Fireless, wet, weary, inclined to disgust, tempted to wish you owned a house, or did not have to live in one at all, you subside into the immediate future of the new home.

Time was when the first of May suggested a May Pole and a May Queen, green fields, and bright children as full of delight as buds are of fresh life. But now it suggests—well—"moving."

Moral.—First. Thank the Lord that there are such things as farms, and that there are people sensible enough to live on them from year to year, and from generation to generation, moving only once in a life-time, and then into heaven. If you are so fortunate as to live in the country, where the delightful May morn dawns upon you, and your soul is exulting in the sweets and beauties of unmigrating fields, spare one inexpensive compassion for city people, who are moving that same memorable day. Envy no tenant nomad anywhere on the round globe.

Second. Be reminded that "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Into that New Jerusalem may we all enter, by and by, where our Father's mansions are, and where we shall have an eternal share in the inheritance subject to no removals, for we "shall go no more out forever."

ONE LAW OF AMUSEMENTS.

The moral effect of our recreations upon our characters is a matter of greater moment than many seem to suspect. There are those who neglect altogether the important requirement of mental diversion; and these need to consider a different aspect of the same general topic. But there are others who, recognizing the demand for amusement, fail to give the adequate attention to the moral bearings of the methods and means of recreation. Play, as a rule, is something good; but all kinds of play are not equally good for the player. Entertainment in itself is desirable; but one entertainment differs from another entertainment, even as "one star differeth from another star in glory." There is the laughter of a fool as well as the laughter of a wise man, and they belong to entirely distinct species.

It is natural to select from among games and sports those that specially please us; but it is not quite wise or safe to allow this single principle of selection to control our choice. We are rational beings as well as sensational creatures; and to be governed directly and altogether by our feelings would be likely to make serious and endless mischief in life. As in selecting our daily diet, we cannot permit the mere pleasure of taste to overrule all other considerations. Our children may prefer sweetmeats to bread and beef, but we deem it best for them to be furnished mainly with nutritious and wholesome food. Or, in their plays, the little people may prefer that which is not most conducive to their health and physical growth; and so we interfere for their welfare.

We are all children of a larger growth, even if we are adults. And while we ought never to be too old for play of some kind, we remain under the necessity of being eclectic in our diversions. Nor will any hard-working or over-worked person do well to ignore this law.

It is not enough that an entertainment amuse us; although it is entirely proper to be amused, the amusement ought not to be demoralizing. Whatever lowers our moral tone, perverts good taste, leaves a bad sensation in the memory, fosters unwholesome desires, cannot be profitable, however agreeable to certain sensibilities at the time. A man may drink intoxicating beverages for the pleasant delirium that follows the cup; but who is not aware that such excitement of the nerves means misery afterward, and ultimate ruin if persisted in? And likewise whatever is unwholesome to moral nerves, although for the time producing a pleasant exhilaration, must in the end prove to be injurious to character. The fact is pretty plain that an intelligent person ought not to select amusements that damage his intelligence; nor can it be much less plain that a moral person ought not to select amusements that damage his moral condition.

This general rule is sound and good—that our diversions should leave us in a better physical, mental and moral condition than before we employed their service. Water is a most excellent beverage for the average man; some people think it even the best yet discovered. But we take pains to have a pure article in our wells and

reservoirs. Bad ingredients, though invisible and beyond the reach of taste, are nevertheless injurious to health. And so, while drinking at the fountains of diversion, we have need to secure for ourselves a pure article.

Young people do not always consider this matter, being inexperienced and largely under the control of present impulse; and on this account it becomes parents, teachers and older friends to guard them against this imminent danger both by precept and example.

Do not dull the mind or harden the sensibilities by an unnatural repression of the desire for amusement; but, at the same time, impress the fact that recreation is not an end to be aimed at, but a pleasant means by which to attain some higher object.

THE EARLY CHURCH.

It has often been observed that our Lord did not organize any religious community during his life, with laws and officers—not anything corresponding to the idea of the church in later times. He selected twelve men for his daily companions, becoming a Teacher of them; making them eye and ear witnesses of his life, and labors, and instructions. The bond of union among these first disciples, who afterward became apostles, was the person of Jesus. Around him they gathered, him they saw and heard and followed. From him they received certain truths, a series of mental and moral impressions, that gradually modified their own thoughts, feelings, characters, and conduct. It was the Messiah moulding a few intimate associates by the marvelous power of his own personality.

But the chosen twelve were not a church, in the strict sense of the word. Neither were the many other friends of Jesus in Galilee and Judea, who were attracted to him by personal confidence and affection. They might be regarded as the materials out of which a church could be formed.

During the whole period of his public ministry, Jesus was evidently and consciously advancing toward the tragic ending of his career on the cross. That event must take him out of the midst of his circle of friends. When he was dead, and they could see him no more, the force of adhesion by which they had been drawn and held together would be gone. They would scatter in alarm and discouragement. The peripatetic school of the Galilean Teacher and his disciples would be broken up. There remained nothing to hold them together save ideas, impressions, memories.

The resurrection of the crucified leader, however, changed the whole outlook. He who had been buried re-appeared in visible form. He talked with his friends, ate with them, breathed upon them, enforced the reality of his renewed existence upon their convictions, till they became assured that he was once more at their center. And so again they clung together, obedient to the same power that had drawn them together at the beginning.

But his movements were now somewhat mysterious. It was not exactly like the old days before the crucifixion. For now he was constantly appearing and disappearing; they were not sure of his presence; he might come into their assembly when least expected, and might not come at all when they were looking for him. All this was strange, and could not fail to familiarize their thoughts with supersensuous life. Sometimes he seemed to them more like a spirit than one having real bodily form.

At the end of forty days these peculiar manifestations and that interrupted intercourse terminated in a visible ascension of Christ into the skies. They saw him no more, and did not expect to see him for a while. But still they continued to think of him as alive; whereas after his crucifixion and burial they had thought of him as dead.

Here then was an entirely new condition of things—a living Lord no longer present with them. Out of their sight, was he beyond all intercourse? Had the enfolding clouds separated him so far from them that he could not hear their voices? They recall his words: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you"; "I go unto my Father"; "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you"; "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And these wonderful sayings of their Lord, now sinking deeper into their minds, open new and strange vistas of hope.

Meanwhile there is one positive command governing their immediate action, viz.: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." This injunction they had been devoutly and joyfully obeying for about nine days, when, on the tenth, as they were assembled in some place of prayer, suddenly there was the roar of a mighty wind sweeping through the house, and cloven flames rested on every head. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This, then, was the promise from the Father; this the power from on high; this the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; this the meaning in part of that assurance given: "I will come to you."

Immediately there are manifestations of marvelous power in the assembly. The entire company are lifted into an ecstatic mental state, with a quickening of their spiritual capacities, that enabled them "to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The whole community round about is moved with wonder. Such things had never before been seen or heard in Jerusalem.

Peter, who is not so lost in the ecstacy as to become unconscious of what the outside crowd are saying, rises and explains to them the meaning of this wonderful scene. It is the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy, connected with the advent of the Messiah. Jesus, whom they had recently crucified, was that Messiah, and the new order of things for the nation and the world had begun. Many believed the words of Peter, and immediately connected themselves with the friends of Jesus. And thus began the Christian Church.

Nothing could be more natural than that all those thus filled with the Holy Spirit should associate together in the utmost intimacy. This peculiar inspiration isolated them from a world that excluded the Spirit from their hearts. Of necessity they constituted a most separate community. They had one Lord, one

Spirit, one faith, one baptism ; they were *one* through the unifying power of Christ's spiritual presence in their souls. All that loved him naturally loved one another. They were not one because they had promised to meet together, nor because they had subscribed to a common document, nor because they owned the building where their meetings were held, nor because they gathered about Peter and his comrades. They were one because the Spirit of the Father and the Son, dwelling in them, transformed them into a new type of character and life.

The Christian Church, thus, was born of the Holy Spirit. All the preparations of Christ's teachings, his personal influence and example, required the supplementary work of inspiration. The words which those disciples had heard, and which had found some lodgment in their natural memories and understandings, waited for the vitalizing and illuminating presence of Christ's Spirit. Afterward they comprehended what had before escaped the grasp of their minds ; sayings dark and enigmatical flamed out with radiant meanings ; parables blossomed ; quotations from the old Scriptures broke open their shells and let out the living truth. Now the unlearned fishermen of Galilee became wise men in the new gospel to the world ; they surpassed the most erudite Rabbis in the knowledge of Divine things. The Messiah, salvation for lost souls, reconciliation with God, the regeneration of human nature, all the highest and most vital facts for mankind glowed in their intellects and burned in their hearts.

Hence their preaching was with wonderful power, as the immediate effects demonstrated. No one could stand before the irresistible force of their arguments. Whole assemblies melted down in conviction and penitence ; hard hearts became fluent under the divine fire, and flowed into the kingdom of God. And even when summoned into the presence of civil authorities, hostile and enraged, those simple men became masters of the situation and dominated all about them ; because it "was given them" what to say in such exigencies.

By this new Divine Power in them the early church swept onward, conquering everywhere. The same Jesus who had healed the sick and raised the dead still worked in and through them—now as Spirit. Nothing was lost by his invisibility, but immense gain had accrued. The disciples were lifted into the true glare of human character and life, viz.: that of inspiration in the fullest sense and largest degree.

So, also, in their interior order as religious communities, all things were moved and determined by this fact of the Holy Ghost within them. Their natural ambitions, vanities, selfishness, carnal appetites, and passions, all yielded to the sway of the new spiritual life. They loved one another with disinterested affection. They dwelt together in unity ; they sought each other's welfare ; they walked in self-sacrifice joyfully. Theories, machineries, methods, governments, were all subordinate to the Life of God that continually quickened and guided them. Without priesthood, without temples, without a liturgy, without creeds, they drew multitudes into a life of obedience and devotion to God.

Such was the church of earlier days. The members were not simply followers of Christ in some theoretic or doctrinal sense ; they were not rallied about a name ;

they were not the propagators of new dogmas, nor defenders of a new faith; but they were, as a body, the habitation of the Spirit of Christ. He was among them and in them, himself reconciling the world unto God.

Can there be anything better, more instructive, and salutary for the church of the nineteenth century than to look squarely into that mirror and see what it actually has become? Having so palpably drifted away from the primitive method and spirit, have we gained or lost power? Has the science of the natural understanding, striving to solve the problems of theology and church order, improved on the original plan? Or, must we not rather turn back humbly and heartily toward the primitive times, and learn how, with the Spirit of God in our souls, to preach and pray and work, in order to save ourselves and a perishing world?

MOUNTAIN AND SEASIDE.

We have come again to the season of the year when many of the dwellers in our great cities seek the purer air of high elevations and ocean margins for health and comfort. Streets thronged with people, the excitement of a life amidst dense populations, may do well enough for winter, when the ground is frozen and the air crisp; but when the Dog-star rages, there is a fascination not easy to resist in the verdure of fields and the foliage of cool green woods, and the popular blue of restless waves. Whatever may be the verdict upon "blue glass," sensible persons long ago decided in favor of cerulean waters and skies. Deep in human souls abides forever this inherent love of nature. All the charming deceits of an artificial civilization can never extinguish the desire for a closer contact with the material creation. And every philanthopist, moralist and preacher, must welcome whatever shall tend to make mankind more susceptible to the salutary influences of rural scenery.

However superior any one may consider city to country life, it must be regarded as a misfortune to be a prisoner within the walls of brick and stone. The city may be a good place for business, for traffic and money making; but those children are to be pitied who never roll on the green grass, stroll among the trees, listen to the songs of free birds and the murmur of living streams. Unfortunate are those imaginations that carry with them through life no pictures of hill-slope and valley, of forest and lake, of purple peaks and flashing seas.

In the Apocalypse heaven may be represented as a glorious city; but, true to nature, the representation must be made to include the River of Life, and the adjacent foliage whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; and there the Lamb who shares the Divine Throne leads the redeemed forth into green pastures and by the side of placid waters.

And so the Heaven "begun below" must include the charms of rural experience. Blessed are they who know how to be happy in the scenes of nature that men sometimes misname solitude. Our Lord's life and public ministry was mainly

in the country. By the sea-side He taught ; in the fields, among flowers and birds, He opened the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven ; on the mountains He prayed and rested in sweet retirement. But in the city they betrayed and crucified Him. And in the long run will great cities, without the healing, invigoration and purifying of nature, betray and crucify Humanity.

Take your children, then, if possible, for a day or two, a week, a month, where the mountains lift their grandeurs or the sea spreads its splendors. Unbend, play, rest, dream ; extort from the whispering leaves, and from bird and beast, their secrets of happiness. Gather from God's creation the cool balm for heated brains and fretted nerves, repose for weariness, respite for headaches, relief from anxiety. Let all the Divine orchestra and chorus of nature render for you the angel-opera of "Peace on earth and good-will to men."

DIVINE ARITHMETIC.

The majority of people act upon the theory that, if they can *figure out* the problem of their life according to the rules of the Multiplication Table, they have not only a sure thing, but even the best thing. Bread and butter, clothes, fuel, rent, school books, and doctor's bills seem to fall readily under this theory. Even in matters ecclesiastical, involving the supernatural, if anything in human life on the earth does, it is the common way to make the calculations upon the basis of mathematics.

And yet, all the while we keep talking about God and Providence, and human dependence upon divine assistance. Is there not in this an error, that endeavors to stretch the lines of our finite arithmetic out to a length commensurate with the Divine? In other words, when we admit God into the problem of human affairs, must we not admit also another element to the problem?

Responding to this enquiry, it is worth our while to remember that our Lord performed some of his most noted miracles within the sphere of the dinner table. On at least two occasions did he furnish his faint and hungry audiences with the needed bodily sustenance. How inadequate in quantity five loaves and two fishes would be for five thousand men, besides women and children, after fasting all day, any commissary can figure. By the same kind of arithmetic the disciples concluded that there was no use of trying to feed so many upon so little. Nevertheless, after an abundant supper, they gathered up twelve baskets-full of surplus provisions. No wonder the populace were inspired, by this exhibition of superhuman ability, to put a crown upon the head of Jesus. We honor the men who achieve success by the rules of our terrestrial mathematics ; but when one appears who can multiply by the infinite Divine arithmetic, nothing but a royal diadem will do for him.

Our human arithmetic is a calculation within the sphere of the senses. Here two and two make four. But in the sphere of *Faith* two and two may make four million. When men perform the multiplication we know exactly the amount resultant ; but when it is God who multiplies, we may safely expect a vast enlargement of the result even on toward the infinite.

Given twelve common men, minus one traitor, and the problem is to evangelize the human race. By our human rules of calculation it can not be done, any more than five loaves and two fishes could feed five thousand men. But it is God who calls these men, commissions them, inspires them, empowers them, accompanies them on their march of conquests. Could Simon Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, capture the Rome of the Cæsars? Not by the Rule of Three, but by the rule of Faith.

It is by the operation of this principle, that the foolish things of the world confound the wise; the weak things confound the mighty; base things and things despised; yea, even things that are nothing at all, bring to naught things that are. The terrestrial mathematicians stare at these unexpected results confounded, their figuring all amiss, and wonder what has happened to their old tables. This has happened: There is a new factor in the reckoning. In the spiritual algebra God is the x—the unknown quantity. How much x stands for can be known only when the problem is finally solved. By what will you multiply Huss, Luther, Knox, Calvin, and Zwingle, to produce Protestantism? By what will you multiply the May Flower to produce the New England of 1874?—might not one almost say, the United States of the present moment? Or by what will you multiply Robert Raikes to get the marvelous results of the Sunday-schools of to-day upon two continents?

When Christ breaks the loaves with his blessing upon them, a little handful may feed a nation. When through his prophet God makes the oil, the widow's jar becomes an inexhaustible fountain. A Sunday-school teacher discouraged by conscious lack of ability and culture for the work, sees beforehand only a cipher as the result of his calculations; but by and by the whole class is converted. God has done for him better than he asked, or even thought. A pastor, walking in diffidence, and burdened by the sense of unfitness, is surprised some day at the number who begin to enquire of him how to be saved. And another, competent in learning and oratory, wonders how it is that even his ten times ten does not produce a hundred.

Prof. Tyndall invites the Christian church to meet him in a hospital and apply the multiplication table to prayer. But suddenly a few women in Ohio begin to pray for temperance, and the whole land quivers with excitement, the nation becomes a forest shaken by the breath of a zephyr. Moody and Sankey go alone to Scotland; and the land of Chalmers and Guthrie flows with full streams of salvation.

Who would have expected it? One and one make two, not twenty thousand. You may calculate the dawn of the millennium, fixing the year by your figures; but the sun of that day will not be lifted above the horizon by any lever of mathematics, before the problem has been solved by the celestial reckoning. Or your unbeliever in Christianity may figure out the extinction of bibles, churches, Sunday-schools, the Christian religion itself, and yet live long enough to see the dawning millennium laugh him to scorn over the brightening eastern hills.

One thing is certain; the supernatural is a fact. Man himself is a supernatural being, and the problems of human life can not be solved without the aid of celestial mathematics. "Acccording to your faith be it unto you." "If ye have faith and doubt not—if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it *shall be done*." How much does this mountain weigh?

HORACE BUSHNELL.

At the setting of the sun we turn away from the gathering shadows, knowing that the luminary of day is still shining on through other skies; and so when some great and good man disappears below the visible horizon of this life, we know that it is not extinguishment, but a passing on into heavens unseen by us.

But besides this, history teaches us that the grandest minds of the race begin to live in the largest and truest sense, among their surviving fellows, after that sunset which we call death. While they remain in the flesh certain laws of relationship and conditions are at work to deprive them of part of their real power and legitimate influence. Shakespeare and Milton in their generations were not the Shakespeare and Milton of to-day. When their contemporaries announced their decease, it was the sunrise to those giant souls. John Bunyan in Bedford jail was an object of commiseration; to-day the author of Pilgrim's Progress enjoys a perpetual coronation at the hands of millions in Europe and America. Luther in Germany was small compared with Luther in the Protestant world.

Some men, indeed, are greater among their contemporaries than ever they will be afterward. They wear buskins on their stage and look taller than they really are. But these are not entitled to a place in the front rank and highest class of minds. Prophets are required not only to go abroad but also to die, in order to be received by mankind. Men of vast will power, of great executive capacity, secure immediate recognition, almost of necessity. But the thinkers, the seers, the pioneer spirits of truth and progress, are ordained to walk more or less in the wilderness. They are liable to be misunderstood by the crowd on the thronged streets of their age. The God who inspires them commands them to wait.

As to how far these remarks are truly applicable to Horace Bushnell there is, doubtless, at present, some difference of opinion. It is yet too soon to expect unanimity of judgment upon such a question; but I suppose there is full liberty of belief for all. Not a few still live who can remember the conflicts through which Dr. Bushnell passed in Connecticut, after his "Christian Nurture" and "God in Christ" had set his Association boiling and bubbling in hot debate. All the blasts from the Æolian cave of Orthodoxy blew furiously upon him from every quarter. It was a great tempest, and the waves of feeling ran high; but not high enough to wreck the man who ventured to sail his own vessel of thought and belief. Had not Bushnell of Hartford been a good man as well as great, the methods adopted to destroy his so-called heresies would have driven him into latitudes from which return would have been impossible, as so often has happened with others. But the storm only drove him home to the arms and heart of God. From the peltings he sought and found shelter in the sympathy of Christ.

Hence it came to pass, that this man, whom many looked upon as a dangerous teacher, became one of the meekest, sweetest, loveliest of Christians. His intellectual genius, so far from overtopping and dominating his piety, was sanctified and exalted by his spiritual life and power. Whatever men might think or say

about his theory of the Trinity, none could deny that he walked with God in a living companionship with Father, Son and Holy Ghost. While his theological opponents censured him for disloyalty to Satisfaction and Substitution in the Atonement philosophy, it was evident at the same time, that the life of God had been born in him and was re-lived in his own conduct.

On this account, as well as others, it would seem that Dr. Bushnell was raised up of God to do an extraordinary work among men. His was a docile and inspirable mind. The recoil which he took, from barren and obstructive dogmas, only made him the more receptive to the spirit of truth. That incapacity of the letter, which he so distinctly recognized and so intensely felt, opened his mind the more widely to the substance of meaning thus purely incarnative.

It was not possible, therefore, for him to be simply a destructive critic of current theories of belief. Other men have gone jubilantly to the task of pulling down the houses which other theorists had built; but at last they sat amid the rubbish and dust of their own criticisms, helpless and desolate. Bushnell, on the contrary, touched the work of other good men with reverent hand; although his veneration never blinded him to their mistakes. Knocking out the pillars that had propped up error, he took pains not to make a wreck of the very structure he meant to improve. In his address at Andover in 1848, he deprecated any sudden or inconsiderate change in current opinions. What he sought was not a mechanical reconstruction of dogmas, but a new infusion of spiritual life, that should burst the shell with a larger development of truth.

That Dr. Bushnell should be much misunderstood is not so very strange a matter. He was a master of language whose thoughts ran naturally and habitually along the deeper strata of meanings in words. Early in his career he discovered, what seemed to him a very important fact, viz. : the incompetency of human speech to express unequivocally the more subtle truths of religion. Words handling matter, and words handling spirit, were very different functions.

In this way, perhaps, he formed a style at once the most flexible and charming and vigorous, but undeniably also subject to suspicion and misapprehension by those whose minds are cast in a different mold from his. The literalist, the mechanical logician, the man who thinks and speaks in technical words and stock phrases, would be very likely to miss the meaning of the author. Bushnell despised cant. The mere rattle and bang of terms, in the repetition of current formulas, annoyed the sensitive ear of his honest soul. Built mentally so that the wheels of his thoughts could not run easily in the old ruts, it was only natural that his words and sentences should make a road-way for themselves. And while some will declare this to be a defect and infirmity, it seems to me ordained to be a means of grace to careless and superficial readers. As the miller, falling asleep in the midst of the monotonous hum of his machinery, snores on through all the buzz and rumble, and only awakes at some unusual noise, so in the mills of theological books many a reader dozes and nods, and will continue to, until aroused by some specialist in style like Bushnell. But instead of being angered by the disturbance of his dreams, he ought to be thankful for the awakening.

There is yet, however, something still more distinctive and radical about the great

theologian of Hartford. His theories and his style rooted themselves in his peculiar mental constitution. President Porter, of Yale College, hit the point exactly the other day, in his brief but eloquent remarks before the recent Brooklyn Council when that body received with profound sorrow the announcement that Dr. Bushnell had gone to his rest in glory. Dr. Porter emphasized the faculty of imagination, as characteristic of Dr. Bushnell's mind.

A poet by nature, in the whole structure of his mind, he was one of a few men whose prose is more truly poetic than most of the rhythm and rhyme of the world. And this very quality of his mind, which to many perhaps will seem to disqualify him for theological work, is really that which best fitted him for it. Like all the men through whom God has spoken most directly to the race, he was a seer, a prophet, an utterer of spiritual verities, perceived intuitively. Like Paul, like John, like Augustine and Luther, it was the high moral imagination that distinguished him of Connecticut, whose writings, now that he is gone, passing into the libraries of the world, become one of the most valuable contributions to the literature of modern theology. No school of the day may be willing to accept him, and of this his friends need not complain: all the seminaries of thought and learning may stand aloof from his name; nevertheless into them all, and through them, or around them, into the generation coming forward to-day, the divine visions of truth and spiritual life which this holy man saw, shine and will shine more and more unto the brighter and better day of Christendom. Already the wintry atmosphere that first received him in his public advent, has begun to feel the approach of a summer warmth, in which tolerance and charity shall bud and blossom as in the garden of the Lord.

A MORAL HEALTH-LIFT.

The mere mechanical act of giving may not be very profitable to him who performs it. And yet it is of some value in the effect of its reaction. You may take a walk, or swing dumb-bells, or go to the health-lift, as a medical prescription, for the benefit of the exercise, and get some good out of it; but not as much as you would receive were you to go through the same motions and use the same muscles under the exhilarating influence of a race, or a game, or some kind of competition. If a man of sedentary habits would be benefitted by a walk of five miles to-morrow afternoon, he need not take it as a dose of rhubarb, but can have it sugar-coated or put up in honey, simply by taking a good fat turkey under his arm and carrying it to Widow Jones, who has five small children to provide for by the labor of her own hands, and who finds nothing to do half of the time but sit and shiver in the cold, and grow thin with hunger and desperate with anguish from hearing her half-starved brood crying for bread. A smart walk and a square look into sad eyes, just long enough to see the sunrise of hope and gratitude dawning in them, like a bright morning after a dark storm, would repair the old pump of the heart, set going the secretory machinery of the liver, cast the devil of dyspepsia

out of the stomach, draw off the surplus blood from the brain, give a good night's sleep, and send one to the breakfast table with a clear head and the appetite of a cow in a clover meadow.

When the Master from Nazareth taught his disciples that it is "more blessed to give than to receive," He gave them a truth that is a great Law of Life. It holds good for the body and the soul, for the intellect and the heart. There is nothing so healing to humanity diseased by selfishness as this; no drug in the shop of the apothecary to be compared to it; no antidote of philosophy against the poison of unhappiness and *ennui* to be named by the side of it.

You found that out on Thanksgiving Day. The bread has been sweeter (no change in the flour or baker) ever since; and the beefsteaks and roasts on your table have been more juicy and tender; and no relic of grumbling, though Bridget does still sometimes send in the dish with a bad burn on it, or with the provoking red of rawness behind the first cut. Your giving has put a pepsin into your stomach, that laughs at indigestible things.

Suppose you try it for Christmas.

Wouldn't it be a grand way to begin the New Year?

WEIGHING SUNBEAMS.

Scales, balances, steelyards, levers, and weights of all kinds, and constructed in many ways, have been devised to ascertain the gravity of bodies. Scales for weighing hay and coal; delicate apparatus for the proper doses of poison; tons, scruples, grains, on the grade down toward the infinitessimal; all prove the inveterate tendency of mankind to weigh things.

They weigh iron for railways, pigs for the market, and that little bundle of crying flannel—called "the baby."

They weigh gold-dust and air; this we have known for some time. But who could ever have dreamed that man, the weigher, would some time put a sunbeam on the scale and weigh that? Nevertheless, it has come to pass. From the knack of weighing a star, to that of weighing a ray of starlight, cannot be an impassable gulf. At any rate the pass has been accomplished.

The apparatus is constructed in the form of a cross. The most delicate glass threads, and exquisite materials and methods of poise, are employed in this wonderful performance. To ascertain exactly the ways and means, ask Mr. Crooke.

But think of it—all ye hay-scale men, ye weighers of iron and coal, of sugar and cotton—and behold the progress of the world into the immaterial and intangible.

Next there will be the weighing of characters, of virtue, of motives, of temper, of spirit. Is not this the final judgment? And is not this sunbeam-weighing cross solemnly suggestive?

HOME.

What a power in this world is a bright, warm, Christian home! How it follows the boys in their wanderings through life! They do sometimes stray very far from the dear old fireside; they forget a great many good things that they ought to remember; they put a whole hemisphere between their childhood innocence and their corrupt manhood; they traverse dreary deserts of wretchedness here and there; and they sometimes find themselves at night out upon a desolate waste, with no softer pillow than a stone. But even there the old Home pictures itself in their dreams; and they behold a ladder, such as Jacob saw when he ran away. And at the top of this ladder, that reaches to the radiant heaven of Home, they see father and mother looking down; and the angels ascending and descending are the brothers and sisters of their childhood. From such a dream scene as this many a wandering boy has turned his waking thoughts toward his father's house. And the thought has conquered his pride, and his evil purpose, and his bad habits, and carried him captive away to the most blessed imprisonment any man ever experienced, viz: the pure and wholesome restraints of a good home.

And thus the holy light of the fireside, gleaming across the stormy sea of a wayward life, brings back at last many a prodigal son. "Home, sweet, sweet home! There is no place like home!"

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE.

Not absolutely the first on the chronological table of this holiday; for it would stir up the antiquarians, and the editors, and special contributors of "Notes and Queries," if one should hazard a guess on the question, "Who invented the Christmas Tree?" Not the very first Christmas tree that ever blazed with burning candles, and glittered with that preternatural fruit peculiar to this tree at this season of the year; but the first that ever threw its wonderful images upon the retina of a pair of bright young eyes. Those unaccustomed eyes had already, on a few occasions, sparkled and laughed, and opened wide upon the plain and common maples and beeches, oaks and hemlocks, of the forest, in their summer attire; but here was a marvelous tree, which made all the recollected trees of grove and forest seem exceedingly bare and homely. It would be called a fairy tree imported from elfinland by moonlight, with some of the stars of that marvelous region still clinging to the boughs; only the baby don't know anything about fairies yet. One of the infant class in the Sabbath school might have called it the burning bush, that Moses once saw; but our little spectator had never heard of that historical incident, and so, of course, could not have imagined that this tree was anything like that bush. Did any one, older or younger, ever form a conception of the burning bush, that hadn't in it something really grotesque? In the Cathedral of Spires is a painting,

one of the intended ornaments of that structure, which represents a bush with literal stem and branches, the latter, by some magic, twisting and ramifying into flames, and these forming a fiery tuft, out of which a gigantic and venerable human head, with flowing white beard and hair, rises to view. Recollecting that painting, one could not have imagined any resemblance between what the Lawgiver of Israel saw and the Christmas tree. Doubtless they were both brilliant, and the flames upon them did not consume the branches; except by an accident, when one of the wax candles set a twig snapping and sputtering.

But for the baby, the Christmas tree might have come from fairy land, or the Peri's paradise, or one of those glittering caverns under the sea or under the hills, or might have been one of the original trees of Adam's and Eve's Eden, preserved by the cherubim and presented for this particular occasion to good children; so wonderful was it to those delighted eyes. And no matter where it came from, there it was, a veritable tree, with boughs of flame, and covered with the choicest selections from several bazars. What pen is equal to the task of describing its pendant glories? There were glass balls of brilliant colors, that would turn the head of a Minnehaha, or any other aboriginal young lady, if they could be suspended from the ear or nose; sugar dolls and wax babies, poised "upon the tree top," destined to a break-neck fall when the time comes to shake the fruitful boughs of this miraculous tree; cornucopias, aching to be inverted, that they may empty their fullness of delicious morsels through little soft fingers in dainty little mouths—those magical horns that Santa Claus filled away off yonder where he keeps that immense toy store, from which he comes every Christmas with a great load of good things for the children; white rabbits hiding under the green branches; tiny stockings, crammed with candies; and Liliputian seven-league boots, full of choice divers and sundries; apples and pears, such as grow only in the most genial climates and richest soils, hanging from the astonished evergreen limbs; and quite back, almost out of sight, among the branches, there was the very magical horn, with attached bells, that Santa Claus blew and jingled as he came over the roof and down the chimney; there, too, was a bird of Paradise perched on the topmost bough (of course these birds never alight except on Christmas trees); and there, too, was a genuine Canary in his cage, winking and tipping over his head to give his black eyes a better view of the things he had come to see; hearts also, as sweet and pretty as sugar and paint could make them; golden mugs, all saccharine in substance; and the queen doll of the occasion, fresh from the skilled hands of the fashionable Madame Demorest herself, faultless in attire, reclining with unconscious grace and impertubable serenity upon the softest boughs, amid all this extraordinary splendor; while Chinese lanterns, in our national colors, kept solemn guard about the tree, and above the whole floated the stars and stripes (for Santa Claus is loyal) in the indescribable beauty of the Red, White and Blue.

No wonder that this brilliant vision, when it appeared through the unfolding door, attended by strains of unusual music, filled that infantile capacity with wonder and delight so full that it overflowed through the eyes, and mouth, and finger-tips.

Older people are not proof against the enchantment. Even when one has seen

the dazzling spectacle a score or two of times, it does not fail to charm. The fact is, that there is found in human nature a constitutional tendency to admire Christmas trees. Our eyes enjoy the blaze and sparkle, the unusual, and you may say the unnatural combinations, postures and junctions. Earthly fortune is a Christmas tree; and people approach it with quickened pulses, brightened eyes, and nervous fingers, each one hoping to find upon those wonderful boughs something for himself. One desires the gilded ball of wealth; another the cornucopia of sensuous pleasures; a third tries to grasp the trumpet of fame and the jingling bells of notoriety. Meantime the brief candles of the years are burning down; one after another goes out, with a wavering thread of smoke dissolving in the air, till at length the tree is dark, and the silence of the night, with all its mysteriousness, rests upon the scene,

O bright little eyes, that for the first time have just looked, with unutterable delight upon this vision, may you come to look through these outward things and see Him in all His marvelous beauty, whose birth as a human infant, we now celebrate! For you let there grow somewhere under the eye of God, trees that shall, from year to year, thus delight you, as time on its starry wheel bears you heavenward. The name of the fairy, or angel that provides this tree, and hangs it with whatever is beautiful to you, is *Love*. And that Babe of Bethlehem, over whose birth the angels waved their shining wings, and chanted their celestial music, bears in heaven the same name—*Love*. The very atmosphere of this day is fragrant with affection, both human and Divine.

O tender little hands, that have, for the first time, plucked treasures from the Christmas tree, may you never be without the clasp of that "pierced hand," as Jesus leads you along the journey of life; and may he at last conduct you to the banks of that beautiful river, where you shall take of the delicious fruit of the Tree of Life—once in Eden, now in Heaven.

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Charles D. Helmer: an earnest life of faith by grace ...
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1. Helmer, Charles Downes, 1827-1879. I. Matthews, J. T. II. Bartlett, William Alvin, 1831-1917. III. Clark, Simeon Tucker, 1836-1893? IV. Helmer, Charles Downes, 1827-1879.

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